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TO OUR READERS:

In compliance with the Israeli military authorities, and under the guise of the much criticized "Emergency Regulations" of 1945, Al-Fajr is required to submit all material prepared for publication in this weekly, and also in the Arabic Daily and Bi-Weekly Hebrew Edition, to the Israeli censorship authorities, who use this blanket authority excessively. The material appearing on pages labeled with letters has all been censored and expunged by the Israeli authorities. We found it necessary and relevant to publish it on these pages in the foreign edition.

Israel Bursts Its Economic Bubble

The Israeli economy crashed this week, with the shekel being devalued 23 percent against the US dollar; government subsidies on basic foodstuffs being cut by 50 percent; fuel prices going up by 23 percent and bank shares, looked upon by the Israeli public as a guaranteed savings bond, being dollar-linked in a six-year maturity plan. By week's end the Israeli finance ministry leaked a story to *Yediot Aharanot* proposing to link the whole of the Israeli economy to the US dollar. The story was confirmed by the ministry. In the West Bank the price of the Jordanian dinar against the shekel skyrocketed and most small grocery stores closed when the price rises were announced.

The crisis, brewing over the past two weeks, hit hard, October 9, when the government closed the stock exchange. The next day trading in foreign currency was suspended. As the Knesset spent all day debating the appointment of the new Shamir government, Israelis tried desperately to get hold of hard currency on the black market and in East Jerusalem. The immediate cause of the collapse was investors liquidating their immediate bank-stock shekel holdings to invest in dollars. The banks could not maintain their grossly over-rated stock and called in the government.

"The government and the banks have been playing around with an overrated shekel and an underrated dollar, making up the short fall by printing shekels and manipulating the gap between inflation and wage-linkage," one Israeli economist told *Al Fajr*. "The government guaranteed to the banks a real return on investment, and they passed it on to savers — whose main preoccupation in times of mega-inflation is to keep the value of their cash. The government was giving a 30 percent per annum return in dollars, and the more money the banks could get, the more they could profit. This spiral grew exponentially, and the government had to pay out. Over the past five years, foreign debt grew from US$11 to US$22 billion. It could not go on." The real dollar price of Israeli bank shares has risen 198 percent since 1980, according to one Tel Aviv financial consulting firm.

By the time new Prime Minister Shamir and Finance Minister Aridor tried to tamper with the problem, an effective 5.5 percent devaluation of the shekel had taken place due to the heavy selling. They pushed the package of cuts, devaluation and price hikes through the new cabinet in an all-night session immediately after they were voted in, October 10.

After some adjustments, a plan was announced to link bank shares to 85 percent of the pre-crash October 6 dollar rate, which will earn interest of 3.6 percent over five years. This could protect investors "if they believe the government won't create an artificial dollar-rate when maturity date comes round," said the economist.

The Thursday, October 13, afternoon edition of *Yediot Aharanot* ran a story, later confirmed by the finance ministry spokeswoman, that Aridor planned to officially link the Israeli economy directly to the dollar, with the US currency eventually replacing the shekel. The plan will be discussed ... Sunday's cabinet session.

According to first reports, the 'dollarisation will be introduced in stages, with wages and

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Fahoum Chairs All-Faction Meeting

Attempts to solve the major crisis within Fatah, the largest faction within the PLO, and the problems in Fatah-Syrian relations continued this week, while the tension on the ground erupted briefly into actual fighting. Both parties charged that they were preparing their troops for an all-out confrontation. Fatah accused Damascus of taking actual steps to control the PLO.

Khaled Fahoum, chairman of the Palestine National Council, convened a meeting in Damascus, October 8, for the representatives of all Palestinian factions to discuss general dangers facing the Palestinian people. Representatives of both parties within Fatah attended the meeting.

Attendees concentrated on the importance of national dialogue as the only means to settle differences within Fatah and to put an end to Palestinian internal fighting. A statement issued by the Joint Command of the PFLP and the DFLP, the other two main PLO factions, explained that the main purpose behind their joining the meeting was "to preserve the unity and independence of the PLO based on the previously adopted political programme, which should be respected by the Palestinian collective leadership."

On the military level, clashes erupted in Tripoli, October 10, but were quickly contained. There was an unconfirmed report of one fighter killed.

Beit Sahour Land Grabbed for Military Purposes

Two hundred and fifty dunums of land in Beit Sahour were confiscated, October 7, by Israeli authorities for "military purposes." Hanna Atrash, the mayor of Beit Sahour, was summoned by Albert Bihar, Bethlehem military governor, the same day and notified of the grab. Atrash was given a military order signed by Uri Orr military commander of the West Bank.

The order, entitled "An Order for Land Confiscation in Beit Sahour" and filed as document 83/9/T, said that the land designated 'confiscated land' has been expropriated for "military purposes." The order gives owners an unspecified period of time to oppose the confiscation order and to claim compensation. The number of dunums confiscated is also not specified. Beit Sahour municipality determined the extent of the grab only after careful study of the map attached to the order.

Mayor Atrash reportedly told Bihar he "rejected this order" and demanded the Israeli authorities retract the decision. Bihar told him that the decision was final and it would be "impossible" to cancel it.

Atrash told *Al Fajr* that he consulted several lawyers who are pessimistic about the case. The lawyers, said Atrash, are gloomy because the land has been confiscated for "military purposes" and is near a military camp.

Lawyer of the municipality, Joudeh Shahwan, told *Al Fajr*: "It is very difficult to win this case, since the Israeli authorities claim that they want to add the confiscated land to a military camp."

During the meeting between Bihar and Atrash, it was revealed that the Israeli authorities will conduct a final survey of the grabbed land in Beit Sahour on October 12. Military surveyors and the custodian of absentee property will put signs and marks on the confiscated land. Atrash told *Al Fajr* that the municipality surveyor will go to check if any land belonging to the municipality is taken. Atrash said that the confiscated land is not located within the municipal borders and that therefore the municipality does not have direct or legal responsibility to oppose the confiscation. He was informed because the owners live in Beit Sahour.

Local *mukhtar* Elias Khair, 60, told *Al Fajr* that the custodian of absentee property told him six months ago that the Israelis were going to confiscate Hosh al-Ghurab. Elias Khair said he is worried about his own 50-dunum land plot, which is only 500 metres away from the military camp. The *mukhtar* told *Al Fajr* that he has cultivated his land every year since 1930.

Israeli authorities call the confiscated land 'Shadgham camp', while Beit Sahour residents call it 'Hosh al-Ghurab'. It is a mountainous agricultural area.

Atrash told *Al Fajr* that the grab of Beit Sahour land is "not the beginning, nor is it the end. The confiscation of land will be continued in the occupied land, because the incoming immigrants need land to build their settlements on," he said.

Copies of the military order were distributed to the office of the West Bank general commander, the military governor's officer, the custodian of absentee property, the liaison officer for interior affairs, and the Beit Sahour municipality.

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Due to this week's devaluation, Al Fajr now costs IS40.

Neutral Observers to Supervise Cease-fire

ROME October 12: Greek, Italian and Yugoslavian observers are considered by all the parties in the Lebanese conflict as neutral enough to undertake the supervision of the cease-fire in the Shouf and Aley mountains, it was announced this week. Such a decision, following in the wake of the consultations held between Walid Jumblatt and the Greek and Italian prime ministers and between the Syrian and Lebanese governments respectively with the three concerned governments, has matured in the past three days in the capitals involved. The decision, however, is for the moment defined as being in principle and has yet to be subjected to verification on the basis of several conditions.

Among these conditions is the approval of such an observation mission by the UN Secretary General, although it is understood that each group of observers will carry its national flag and will not be part of a United Nations body. A second condition is further verification that in fact all the parties — namely the Gemayel regime, the Lebanese resistance in all its components and Syria — will accept these observers. Conversely, this also means that if at any time any of the parties objects to the permanence of the observers, they will be withdrawn. An open question is to whom the observers will report any violations of the cease-fire, not a simple question to resolve.

Finally, the deployment of the observers is conditioned on constructive progress in the political negotiations scheduled to take place within the framework of the so-called reconciliation conference.

Observers here are noting particularly a statement made yesterday by Italian Foreign Minister Giulio Andreotti, who said Italy's participation in the observer mission will be accompanied by a gradual reduction of the Italian presence in the multinational force.

Nabhi Berri, leader of the *Amal* movement, among his militiamen in the southern suburbs of Beirut during one of the latest cease-fires between the Shi'ite movement and the Lebanese Army in south Beirut.

Anti-Druze Crusade

by Livia Rokach
Our Rome Correspondent

ROME — Through the past week the Western media, led by the Vatican radio, again launched what Lebanese National Salvation Front leader Walid Jumblatt correctly defined during his meetings with political personalities and journalists in Europe as "an anti-Druze and...in general an anti-Muslim crusade." The pretext for such a crusade was once more the alleged "desperate condition of thousands of Christian refugees in Deir al-Qamar, besieged by Druze and Muslim militias."

Newspapers, radio and TV, which during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and through the siege of Beirut strictly avoided telling their audiences about the suffering and deprivations of the populations concerned, went to great pains to list the number of grams of bread and other products passed to the refugees at Deir al-Qamar by the International Committee of the Red Cross, in order to forecast that these refugees "are about to die of hunger within the next few days."

Correspondents and interviewers, who never once, in past months, attempted to inquire after the fate of thousands of Palestinian and Lebanese prisoners and missing who have disappeared since being taken to the dungeons and torture chambers of the Phalangist gangs and of Lebanese President Amin Gemayel's secret police services, suddenly turned up in Deir al-Qamar to discover the presence of "innocent civilians" suffering at the hands of the "awful Turk." Interestingly, none of these neo-humanitarians actually had the courage to tell public opinion who, in Deir al-Qamar, is holding the civilan refugees hostage,and who is responsible for the long siege on this village — a very relative siege in any case, seeing that, unlike besieged and curfewed cities, villages or refugee camps in areas under occupation, in Lebanon or in the West Bank are open not only to the ICRC but also to journalists, photographers and TV camera people, who have been permitted to go in and out at any time.

Because the man commanding the besieged Phalangist gangs at Deir al-Qamar is none other than Samir Giagia, the professional killer, who in 1977 executed, on the orders of Bashir Gemayel, the notorious Ehden "massacre"— the cold blooded murder of Toni Franjieh, son of the ex-Lebanese President Suleiman Franjieh, his wife, his three-year-old daughter and more than 30 Maronite Christian inhabitants of Ehden.

From the north of Lebanon, where in the past five years Giagia and his Phalangist gang carried out innumerable other murders and terrorist actions, this professional killer was secretly transferred to the Shouf last February by order of Fady Frem, the Phalangist milita commander and Amin Gemayel's brother-in-law. This transfer to the area, at that time under Israeli control, was decided with the benevolent consent of the occupation authorities, with a view to a Phalangist take-over of the Shouf when Israel withdrew. The protection promised at that time to this murderer of Christians and Muslims alike explains the intervention by an armoured corps unit of the occupation army when the resistance forces were about to take over Deir al-Qamar

While the crusade of the past week was going on, Samir Giagia, far from remorseful for either his past crimes or his present responsibilities in keeping the civilian refugees of his own community under siege, confessed to an Italian visitor to Deir al-Qamar his philosophical view of the moment: "It is better to have 15,000 people killed today than to risk postponing the final solution (for Phalangist hegemony over Lebanon) by 10 or 20 years..."

Cease-fire Holding, Officially

Although officially the cease-fire is still said to be holding between the warring factions in Lebanon, there have been daily clashes and sporadic shelling, this week, between Lebanese nationalists and the Lebanese regime, both in the Shouf and in the southern suburbs of Beirut. In Tripoli there were clashes between leftist groups and Muslim elements, which resulted in the death of over 50 and the injury of hundreds on both sides.

The most serious incident came when artillery shells were exchanged, October 8, between Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) militias and the Phalangist militias in Iqlim al-Kharroub. The area falls between the nationalist-controlled Shouf mountains and the new Israeli lines at the Awali River. After several hours, the four-partite military committee reached a cease-fire agreement. No casualties were reported.

Foreign news agencies reported daily clashes in the same area. Rockets and heavy artillery fire were used on both sides. The clashes covered the axes of Souq al-Gharb, Aley, Kahhale and Jiyye. The fiercest battles were reported, October 12, when the Phalangist militias in Souq al-Gharb were targetted by nationalist forces. The Beirut front also witnessed daily clashes and exchanges of sniper fire between the Shi'ite Amal movement fighters and the Lebanese Army. According to sources on both sides, the fighting resulted in only material damage, with no human casualties.

On the northern front, fighting erupted between Lebanese nationalist militias and elements belonging to Sunni Muslim groupings. The day-long clashes, which escalated to include heavy artillery exchanges, resulted in the death of 37 people on the nationalist side and 13 on the other. Reports also said that hundreds were injured.

The Tripoli fighting continued the next day.

The national reconciliation conference agreed upon in the cease-fire pact of September 29 has not yet started work. Initial efforts to convene the conference failed to bring an agreement on the site for talks. The call by Lebanese President Amin Gemayel to hold the conference at the Ba'abda presidential palace was rejected by Walid Jumblatt, PSP leader, for security reasons. A first session was eventually held, October 13, on the Green Line between East and West Beirut. Italian troops provided security for both sides.

White House, Shultz at Odds over US-Syrian Relations

by Ghassan Bishara

Finally a clear explanation of Syria's aggressive treatment of the PLO in Lebanon's Beqa'a valley and Tripoli is coming to light. A *Washington Post* column by well-know commentators Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, October 12, explains why the Syria of Hafez al-Assad is doing what it is doing. Evans and Novak argue, with quotes from administration officials, that a "dim outline of a US-Syrian deal to deny the Palestine Liberation Organisation access to Israel through Lebanon's Shouf mountains is being hammered out" or may be being prepared. Historic jealousy between the State Department and the National Security Staff at the White House may cause the Secretary of State, George Shultz, to "undercut" the above plan because of a personal grudge against al-Assad and his regime, based on the latter's rejection of the Lebanon-Israel agreement, a Shultz plan.

The secret, Evans and Novak argue, "a Syrian guarantee not to allow any PLO fighters back into the Shouf. . . from (where) they could mount assaults on Israeli occupation forces " The White House hopes that this will turn out to be a basis for further cooperation with Syria, now the most powerful state in the Arab Middle East. Shultz is sounding his displeasure with this, they argue, not for love of the PLO but out of concern for his role as Secretary of State. He is not being advised about the White House's plans, and this makes him more able to see and understand Israeli objections to the US getting closer to Syria. MacFarlane, Reagan's envoy to the Middle East, is communicating his important progress reports through the White House in specially coded phone conversations rather than through the usual channel of the State Department, another source of anger for Shultz.

Evans and Novak argue that this deal is significant because the US is attempting to carry on a Middle East policy independent of Israel's input and based on the US's own perceived interests. This arrangement, the authors argue, was described by a top policy maker as "a signal to the US and Israel that the Syrians will guarantee Israel's northern border if they (the Israeli Army) get out of Lebanon."

Shultz is adopting the Israeli position that Syria is not to be trusted: first on not allowing PLO fighters back in the Shouf, once the Israeli army gets out, and second on withdrawing their own forces out of Lebanon once Israel is out. Shultz feels that his agreement between Israel and Lebanon has been defeated by al-Assad and thus he wants to humiliate him by joining the Israeli camp — the strong card in the Middle East. Because of Shultz's personal stand against al-Assad, the authors argue that the final outcome of this remains in doubt.

Squeeze on al-Bireh Vegetable Market

Al-Bireh municipality officials backed by Israeli police and border guards destroyed 13 fruit and vegetable carts they grabbed at the local market, October 10.

Angry merchants say this latest attack is only one of the major difficulties they have faced since an Israeli was made mayor to replace Mayor Ibrahim Tawil, in March 1982. They cite attempts to impose high prices for empty crates, increased fees which they have to pay to the municipality and a contractor they have put in charge of the market.

Customers at the al-Bireh market are paying much higher prices for their fruit and vegetables.

Fifteen Israeli soldiers and policemen riding in two military vehicles and a police car accompanied al-Bireh's appointed mayor, Yusef Jabra'il, in the move to confiscate 13 fruit and vegetable carts from al-Bireh market, October 10 at noon. They charged the owners had "violated public order." One of the owners told *Al Fajr* the Israelis took the three-wheeled carts to the local garbage dump and set fire to them. Each cart costs an estimated IS15,000 — before the recent economic collapse.

Jabra'il told *Al Fajr*, "The municipality confiscated the carts to maintain order and to curb violations of the law."

In what is being interpreted as a coordinated move, two Israeli wooden crate companies,Haargazim and Argazai Shivi Mezoun, distributed warning letters to the merchants of the market demanding the empty boxes of fruit and vegetables be returned to them for IS40. Merchants buy the boxes for IS76. The two companies threatened to take the merchants to court if they refuse to honour the agreement.

Vegetable and fruit sellers in al-Bireh are angry at the confusion, anarchy and commercial stagnation in the market. They say the latest moves by Israelis are part and parcel of wider problems. Ramallah resident Hanna Mohammed Darwish, who lost his three carts in the raid, appealed, October 11, to the appointed mayor and Israeli authorities to permit him to sell vegetables. He said he is responsible for feeding eight people. Darwish pointed out that the municipality prevents small merchants who sell produce from carts to stand at the corner of the market. The municipality has not offered them a suitable commercial market, Darwish said.

Mohammed Khamis Zeine, another small merchant, told *Al Fajr* that the appointed municipality carried out a similar campaign against them four months ago.

Over 25 unlicenced residents from Ramallah and al-Bireh work as fruit and vegetable sellers from carts, while 63 licencees sell vegetables and fruit from market stands. The owners of the stands in the market have filed several complaints with the authorities and the municipality against cart owners and vegetable wholesalers who deal in retail trade.

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RAMLE — Over 100 individuals, most of them women, demonstrated, October 7, in front of the entrance to Neve Tertza prison for women. The demonstrators, who replied to a call by the Women's Committee Against the War in Lebanon and other democratic women's movements, were protesting the bad treatment that the Palestinian political prisoners were receiving. Protestors say that 38 Palestinian political prisoners are receiving inhuman treatment by the authorities, who refuse to recognise them as political prisoners. The prisoners are refusing to obey an order to cook for the prison guards, and have declared a strike in protest. (Translation: Al Fajr, October 11).

Jaffans Protest Delay in Mosque Reconstruction

Over 150 Palestinians held demonstrative prayers at Hassan Bek Mosque in Jaffa, October 7, to protest the authorities' "continued foot-dragging" in rebuilding the ancient mosque.

Believers who came from Jaffa, Lydda, the Galilee and the West Bank were responding to a call by the Jaffa Youth Committee, which has been following up on the authorities' repeated promises about rebuilding the ancient site.

Sheikh Bassam Abu Zeid, the *imam* of the Jaffa mosque, told the gathering that he "seriously doubted" the claims of Abed Kaboub, head of the Jaffa *waqf* committee, that rebuilding will start in two weeks. He said a follow-up committee is going to be elected soon to take action concerning the renovation of the Hassan Bek Mosque.

Hassan Abu Shehadeh, a Jaffa resident and an activist over the mosque renovation problem, told *Al Fajr* that Kaboub made announcements on Israel TV that the renovation will start within two weeks — but until now no plan has been drawn up and no construction plan has been brought to the municipality for approval. Shehadeh says that he is "very worried that a real conspiracy is in the works for obliterating the mosque." He noted that anti-Hassan Bek slogans have been painted in Tel Aviv without the authorities doing anything.

The Jaffa activist noted that with winter around the corner, the authorities' inaction will cause the continued deterioration of the mosque. The minaret of the mosque "mysteriously" collapsed in the early hours of April 2, 1983. The authorities claimed that it collapsed because of high sea winds, but local residents called the area's meteorologist, who noted that on that night the winds were calm. No thorough investigation was launched into the reasons for the collapse.

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Teaching Permits Forced on Gaza Profs

Israeli military authorities ordered, October 1, 100 lecturers at the Gaza Islamic University, all local ID holders, to obtain permits from the military governor before teaching at the university. The new order, which the authorities say is based on Egyptian Order Number 380, was condemned by officials at the university as an interference in higher education.

University officials say the order is equivalent to West Bank Military Order 854. MO 854, enacted in 1980, would give Israel control over who teaches and studies in local universities and over the curriculum. The military have backed away from attempts to implement it in the face of total opposition.

UNRWA Vetoes Dheisheh Construction

Residents of the Dheisheh refugee camp in Bethlehem and members of the administration of the local youth centre issued a statement, October 10, condemning an UNRWA order that they get UNRWA-issued permits before undertaking construction or restoration. UNRWA officials allegedly threatened journalist Hamdi Farrah and his family with police action if they did not stop work on their home.

Two members of the Dheisheh Youth Centre, Hassan Abd al-Jawad and Jawdat Mana, met Wadie Nather, the director of the Hebron UNRWA office, September 29, to protest the decision and demand clarification.

UNRWA claimed, "As in the past 30 years, written authorisation of the Agency must be obtained through the camp services officer who passes requests to his supervisors. Safety and health aspects are considered when the building specifications are checked by qualified technical staff. Scores of approvals have been given over the past months.

"The long-standing camp regulations provide for the reporting of unauthorised constructions.

"All long-term residents of the camps are aware of these regulations which were drawn up in the interests of safety, health and neighbourly relations a long time ago."

Israeli legal authorities notified 15 Dheisheh residents through lawyer Felicia Langer that the High Court session to discuss an appeal against the sealing of the camp by the Israeli army will be delayed until October 24. No reasons were given.

BZU International Conference Focuses on Rural Issues

Scholars from Europe and the US joined Bir Zeit academics and West Bank researchers in the International Symposium on Rural Society in the Middle East, held at Bir Zeit University, October 6-8, 1983. The symposium, jointly sponsored by the University of Durham, the University of Amsterdam and Bir Zeit University, was the second in a series of symposia planned to examine issues concerning agrarian relations in the Middle East.

Sessions focused on theoretical issues in the study of agrarian societies; issues in the study of nomads; the debate on proletarianisation; and issues in the rural development of Palestine and women in the rural Middle East. Seventeen participants delivered papers for discussion on these issues, and two films on Rashidiya camp, South Lebanon, before and after Israel's invasion last year, were shown.

Participants were impressed with the conference, but some members of the local intellectual and activist community protested that they were not invited. The local women's movement was particularly bitter that they could not contribute to the debate.

One of the invitees, Ann Scott, a Britisher, was banned from attending the conference when the Israeli airport authorities returned her.

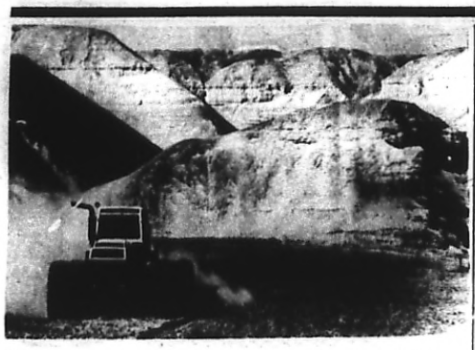
Religious Judge Town-arrested

Sa'ad al-Din Alami, chairman of the Supreme Islamic council, telegrammed Israeli Minister of Defence Moshe Arens October 10, protesting the town arresting of Hamad Suleiman Khdair, Tulkarm *Sharia* judge.

The six-month town arrest order, signed by Israel's military commander of the central district Uri Orr, compels Khdair to stay at his home in Nablus from sunset to sunrise, to remain in Nablus and to report to the central police station in Nablus once every week. The order is dated August 2. The Tulkarm judge and sermoner at the Rawda Mosque in Nablus, Hamad Khdair was notified about the town arrest two months later, October 6. Unspecified "security considerations" were given as the reason for the order.

Sheikh Sa'ad al-Din Alami told *Al Fajr* that this is the first time a *waqf* judge has been placed under movement restriction since 1980, when Hebron Islamic Judge Rajab Tamimi, along with the mayors of Halhoul, Mohammed Hassan Milhem, and Hebron, Fahd Qawasmeh, were deported. Sheikh Alami demanded immediate cancellation of the order.

Khdair was appointed judge for the Tulkarm area last year. He has served as *imam* of the Rawda Nablus Mosque for the past decade.



US$12 million worth of infrastructure for Israeli dates and alfalfa

'Security Zone' Set for Land Reclamation

Israeli authorities turned over more than 20,000 dunums of . . . . . land which hugs the Jordan River to Israeli agricultural settlements.

Mattityahu Drobless, head of the settlement division of the Jewish Agency, told journalists, October 9, that his department has so far spent US$12 million to clear the mine-filled military security zone along the Jordan River for agricultural use. According to Drobless, the WZO is planning to spend US$15 million more on completing the project. Twelve thousand dunums have already been prepared and planted with dates and alfalfa.

The land concerned, which Israeli experts say has excellent soil, spans from Hula in the north to Wadi Arabeh in the south, and includes 38 kilometres of newly-paved roads.

Three huge irrigation pumps will pump over 120 million cubic metres of water yearly from the Jordan River to the settlements. This massive reclamation operation, which *The Jerusalem Post* admitted has far-reaching geopolitical implications, is designed to raise the number of Jordan valley settlements from 21 to 31 within two years and increase settlers from the present 4000 to 10,000.

Israeli papers claim that the decision, which reflects a dramatic change in Israel's perceptions of its security situation, was made possible by the departure of Palestinian fighters from the Jordan valley after Black September clashes in 1970. West Bank observers see the move as demarcating the Likud "red line". Ra'anan Weitz, settlement czar for the World Zionist Organisation, commented during a tour of the area, "This is our most important strategic line." The Jordan valley settlements were set up under the Labour government. The large plantations are important for having replaced small-plot Palestinian village farming and are important suppliers of Israeli agricultural produce.

Knesset Accepts Shamir as PM

Almost two months after Menachem Begin announced his plans to retire, Yitzhak Shamir was voted in as prime minister of a new government, October 10, after a full day of debates. He won a vote of confidence by the surprisingly small majority of 60-53.

Shamir, after weeks of wrangling with the smaller coalition partners, presented a Cabinet almost identical to that of Begin.

During the debate, Labour opposition leader Shimon Peres called on Shamir to call early elections. Shamir rejected the idea.

After the vote, Shamir outlined future policy. He pledged to continue the settlement policy and to honour no peace document except the Camp David agreement.

Shamir's first cabinet meeting, held immediately after the Knesset vote, concentrated on the decline of the Israeli economy. After an all-night session, they cancelled subsidies on basic commodities, raising prices by at least 50 percent, and devalued the shekel by 23 percent.

Yesh Gvul Rally in Zib

About 20,000 attended a *Yesh Gvul* (There is a Limit)-sponsored Israeli music festival on the site of the destroyed village of Zib, near Acre, September 28.

The festival raised an estimated US$83,000 for the families of *Yesh Gvul* members jailed for refusing to serve in Lebanon.

Organisers said the concert was a major success. They attracted thousands of politically uncommitted youth to hear writer Yonatan Geffen, Benzine, Arik Sinai, Libby and the Flesh and Hava Albertstein.

Albertstein received a warm welcome — she had been singled out, in the Hebrew press, for attacks for appearing. The organisers had to go to court to get the Zib site, now a public park, after attempts were made to cancel their booking of the site.

An enthusiastic audience stood for one minute in silence mid-way through the concert in memory of the victims of the Lebanon war and *Yesh Gvul* and Peace Now activist Emil Greenzweig, killed in a grenade attack on a demonstration in Jerusalem, last February.

Recently the military authorities have stepped up pressure on *Yesh Gvul*, says Naftali Orner, a member. One hundred of the movement's 2000 members have now served jail terms for refusal to go to Lebanon.

The latest tactic, leading members say, is for the army to send a call-up notice to a *Yesh Gvul* member, send him to prison for refusing to go to Lebanon, then give him another call-up notice for Lebanon as soon as he gets out.

"What the authorities are trying to do is isolate members and demoralise *Yesh Gvul*," said Rabbi Banvolgyi, another *Yesh Gvul* member. Banvolgyi was the first reservist to receive consecutive prison sentences for refusing to serve in Lebanon. He has spent a total of 56 days in prison so far.

The money raised by the concert will be put into a fund for families of jailed *Yesh Gvul* members. If an Israeli serves in the reserves, the family receives insurance benefits from the government; however, serving a jail term does not entitle the reservist to benefits. Nor does it free him from serving the required one-month-per-year term in the army.

Settler Jailed for Shooting Bireh Youth

The Israeli District Court in Jerusalem sentenced, October 6, a Kiryat Arba settler convicted of deliberately shooting and wounding a Palestinian youth, to one year imprisonment and one year suspended. *The Jerusalem Post* reported, October 10, that Eliezer Itzkovitch, an officer of a Kiryat Arba synagogue, who was in charge of maintenance and workers at the Israeli-run al-Bireh municipality was found guilty of shooting and wounding a local youth in the back, during demonstrations in July 1982, protesting the Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

During the hearing, the Israeli officer told the court that he had acted on orders from then-municipality head Maurice Bar Kochba. He told the court that Bar Kochba told him and the municipality driver to catch the boys who were throwing stones at the municipality building. Itzkovitch claimed that "youths tried to surround him and throw stones the size of a fist." He further claimed that he fired three shots in the air before shooting at one of the youths, who he said was making obscene gestures at him.

The judge rejected his claims stating that he was convinced the settler fired at the youth before stones were thrown. The judge rejected the defendant's allegation that he was ordered to pursue the youths by the municipality head.

According to *Al Fajr*'s files, an al-Bireh youth, Taher Juma'ah, was shot in the upper part of the leg, on July 4, 1982.

Fruit and vegetable carts are the latest targets in al-Bireh/BLB

continued from page 3

Bireh Market

The municipality appointed an Israeli watchman a few months ago, Yusef Hazan, and authorised him to keep order and expel carts from the market. Hazan told *Al Fajr* that he "only carries out the orders and the instructions of the appointed mayor."

The main change which the Israelis introduced, said Jweiles, was renting the market for JD73,000 per annum, to a person called Abd Rasoul. The large rental fee leads to exploitation, said Jweiles.

The market contractor's son, Jamal Abd Rasoul, 22, who works as an accountant in the market, told *Al Fajr* that his father is "compelled" to charge JD1 per day to stand owners, IS150 to each cart seller and take 10 percent from the total sales of individual farmers who come to market their vegetables from Ramallah villages.

Vegetable stand owners are bitter because they have to pay JD50 in annual municipal registration fees and JD5-10 to rent scales from the Israelis.

Abu Jweiles, 53, owner of a vegetable stand, told *Al Fajr*, "We did not have such problems during the time of the Arab municipality."

Ibrahim Tawil, the elected mayor, told *Al Fajr* that the municipality appointed five employees to supervise the market and would not rent the market to any one person. The appointed mayor, however, claims that the "main problem" is that merchants and sellers "do not want to cooperate in implementing the law." Jabra'il claims Jordanian law permits him to rent the market to one person.

Asked if a rental of JD73,000 does not lead to price inflation, the appointee said, "We did not compel anyone to pay this figure." He said that the taxation is applied according to law.

Asked what is the solution for cart owners whose carts were confiscated, he said, "This problem existed in the past and I do not have any solution."

THIS WEEK'S CENSORSHIP

Following is a breakdown of censorship cuts for issue 180, October 14, 1983:

Number of original articles submitted to censors	29
Number of articles totally censored out	9
Number of articles mutilated beyond use	2
Number of articles partially censored but used	2
Number of articles passed	16

Democratic Future In Palestinian Hands

"The future of democracy in Israel very much depends on the Palestinians," Jacobo Timmerman said, October 5, at an international authors conference in Los Angeles. "I hope that the Palestinians will solve their internal problems, will establish a state and will let Israel see that it can live with the gentiles."

Timmerman said that the future of democracy in Israel depends also on the determination of more young soldiers "to go to jail instead of Lebanon." He expressed pride in his son who has been imprisoned for that reason. One of the obervers responded: "One Israeli who obeyed orders and was killed in Lebanon has more honour than all the Timmermans together." (Translation: HaAretz, October 6, 1983)

The Dawn
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EXPORTING CRISES

The new Israeli cabinet, led by the well-known former Zionist terrorist, Yitzhak Shamir, decided, October 12, only a few hours after the Knesset gave it a vote of confidence, to devalue the Israeli shekel by 23 percent and to raise basic food prices by 50 percent. Shamir's government claims that this is a step towards saving the Israeli economy from total collapse.

Since the Likud rise to power in 1977, they had two main concerns: increasing Israel's military strength of arms and will, with all the resulting battles and the current war it led to; and settlement building.

Major aggressive wars have been launched, including the two invasions of South Lebanon: in March 1978, which led to the creation of an Israeli protectorate under the Lebanese separatist major Sa'ad Haddad; and in June 1982, which led to the occupation of all of South Lebanon until the southern suburbs of the Lebanese capital until today.

War was and continues to be waged against groupings of Palestinians in the occupied territories: in schools, universities, camps and even at religious sites. Tens of new provocative settlements were built and others expanded. Plans to populate these settlements, by offering a heavily subsidised life in the occupied territories, remains on top of the agenda for the Israeli government, with all that this entails in budgetary terms.

In the past, whenever the bottom fell out of the Israeli economy, the Zionist rulers tried to solve their woes by waging a war against the Arab countries, concentrating their public's attention on Palestinians outside their borders. But nowadays the possibilities of such an adventure seem very low. The Israeli public is against continuing the war in Lebanon. The Israeli government itself has shown reluctance to incur more losses which such a war has brought them. Embarking on a war against Syria for the time being is a bit off the horizon.

Israel will try to solve this crisis on the backs of people other than the Israelis. The only possibility open to them now is to further economically burden the 2 million Palestinians living directly under their control.

The shape of such a solution will be seen and felt in the very near future.

AL FAJR — Jerusalem Palestinian Weekly

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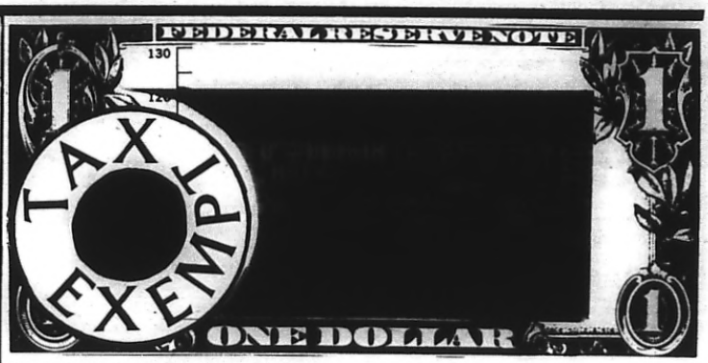


Questioning the "educational and charitable" status of monies for Israeli settlements, a lawsuit is filed in a US district court.

CHALLENGING THE TAX EXEMPT CASE OF AMERICAN JEWISH ORGANISATIONS

by Ghassan Bishara
Our Washington DC Correspondent

In an act which could destroy the current financing of Zionist settlement policy, a lawsuit was filed October 6 in the US district court in the District of Columbia challenging the tax exempt status of major American Zionist organisations on the grounds that these organisations are neither charitable, nor educational. The suit was filed on behalf of individual Americans, Israeli Jewish citizens, elected West Bank mayors and Palestinian farmers, and was announced today by attorneys Mark Lane and Linda Huber, and Dr John Davis in a press conference at the Madison Hotel.

Funds raised by these American Jewish organisations, such as the Jewish National Fund, the United Jewish Appeal and the World Zionist Organisation's American section, amount to more than US$750 million annually. The lawsuit argues, and the attorneys are ready to prove, that such money is going to Israel to "support the establishment of exclusively Jewish settlements upon land confiscated from Palestinian landowners, in violation of fundamental policies of the United States." Mark Lane, himself a Jewish American attorney, argued on behalf of the plaintiffs that these contributions are going to groups which are "political conduits of a foreign nation" and are being overlooked because of "special relationships" between the leaders of the US and Israel. These funds are to the "detriment of the people of both countries, Israel and the US."

Linda Huber, the other attorney on the case, said at the press conference that the tax exempt status of these American Jewish organisations is depriving the US treasury of "revenues needed for domestic programmes," while at the same time the raised funds are being "used to support the confiscation of Palestinian land on the West Bank for the building of exclusively Jewish settlements." Ms Huber also argued that Israeli settlement policy is against US policy and has been described by President Reagan as an "obstacle to peace" in the Middle East. Former President Carter has described Israeli settlements on occupied Arab land as illegal, she said.

Dr John Davis, who is also a plaintiff, said in the press conference that Israeli policies in the territories have thwarted efforts by the UNRWA, which he headed a few years back. UNRWA's work, he said, has aimed at providing educational opportunities as well as assisting in the economic development in the territories, while these tax deductible contributions to Israel and their use on the West Bank are depriving West Bank Palestinians of their land and driving them altogether out of it. Lane and Huber, who recently visited the West Bank, said that American contributions to Israel are being used to oppress Palestinians in the territories and are making "the region bloom only with barbed wire."

The plaintiffs represented by Lane and Huber — Palestinians, Americans and Israelis — included mayors Shaka'a, Khalaf and Tawil, of Nablus, Ramallah and al-Bireh, among others of the West Bank, John Davis, author and former commissioner general of UNRWA, Edward Keenan, a professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, Subhi Widdi of Brooklyn, American citizens, Charlie Biton, a member of Knesset in Israel, and Neturei Karta's Rabbi Moshe Hirsch of Jerusalem. The attorneys on behalf of their clients will argue that the US tax exempt provisions are being violated by the Jewish American organisations. The law in question provides that in order to be eligible for tax exempt status, "an organisation's activities must be religious, charitable or educational." It also "may not practice discrimination based upon religion or national origin. It may not support the oppression of a people or the denial of basic human rights." Such an organisation, the law reads, "must be in harmony with public interests, (and) may not serve as a conduit established to benefit a foreign nation."

Both Huber and Lane argued that Israel, the ultimate recipient of these tax exempt contributions, used the funds to confiscate land from Palestinians, to uproot their olive and orange trees, their means of survival, and to divert their water and build settlements on land confiscated from them. Israel also, by occupying the West Bank since 1967, denies its people basic human rights. Some of the plaintiffs have suffered and can prove, the attorneys argue, "personal injury" resulting from the use of these funds, a requirement that must be satisfied in order for the court to hear the case.

Lane and Huber cited recent cases in which the US Supreme Court made a decision applicable to this case.The Bob Jones University case is one where the highest court abolished its status as a tax exempt educational institution based on findings of racial discrimination, they said.

In accordance with the law, an answer to the lawsuit has to be received by the attorneys no later than 60 days from the day the suit was filed.

Like any other case in the US involving Israel, this also promises to attract much attention. The defendants in the lawsuit, Donald Regan, Secretary of Treasury, and Roger Egger, Jr, Commissioner of the Internal Revenue Service; will no doubt spare no effort, together with the Zionist organisations in the US, to win this case — for much more than US$750 million depends on it.

AL FAJR invites our readers to contribute letters, articles, and opinions. Contributions must be signed, but names may be withheld upon request.

A LETTER TO CHAIRMAN ARAFAT

Beyond Political Formalities, the Case for Non-Violence

Excerpts from a letter addressed to PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat:

Dear Chairman Arafat,

Among about 240 NGO representatives at the UN Geneva ICQP, more than 20 representatives — Jews and Arabs — from ten organisations in Israel attended. Naturally, there was a hope that these people would be able to meet with some representatives of the PLO delegation. I'm sure that some of them did. I'm also sure that no grounds for actual cooperation could be consented on and implemented. The only ground on which such cooperation between peaceful communities could be based is the ground of non-violent struggle that doesn't provide excuses for the dominating power to exercise its oppressive and repressive facilities.

The absence of the concept of non-violence on one hand, and the prevailing belief that problems can and should be solved only by violent force and/or by political formalism (formal politics), blocked the way. Taking this into account, along with the fact that none of the Israeli citizens who attended had been official representatives of the political entity that constitutes the oppressive forces — not even those anti-Zionist Knesset members, nor those Zionist figures who dissent from the prevailing system in Israel — there was no theme to be discussed. It is also a fact that there was nothing to quarrel about, and that was positive, of course. However, because of the formal expectations on both sides and the expectations that the other side should make a step forward, not much could be expected indeed. What actually happened is not very positive:

1. Chairman Arafat's contribution — through a messenger — to the opening session of the ICQP devaluated his former meetings with "moderate Zionist" personalities, like the famous meeting with Avneri-Peled-Arnon. The reason for this was the use of the term "Zionist entity" replacing the term "Israel", used in the past several times by Palestinian sources.

2. Uri Avneri's response was to issue an antagonistic press release in order to keep face with the Israeli public, with which he maintains a very delicately worked out struggle for the change of its opinion. Just as the Palestinians hold to patriotic formalisms, Avneri and his fellows do the same. Their slogan is "peace between mutually respected fighters" . . . the ridiculous point is, of course, that one patriotism of course contradicts the other. The solution, especially in the given conflict, is in one common patriotism, that cannot be national, or "one-peopled". Unfortunately, this is not understood by either side, since both are trapped in formalism, and intellectual games, for which after all many people pay the bloody bill.

3. In the meantime, at the NGO meeting, something happened. Avneri and Peled, who attended the conference as "eminent personalities", were scheduled in advance to lead a panel on possibilities for Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. This panel never took place. Some NGOs suggested that Dr Uri Davis, from the Department of Palestine Studies at Exeter University, England, (himself an Israeli citizen) share the panel. It was Palestinian Arab Israeli MK Tawfiq Toubi who explicitly and blatantly objected to this, toghether with the other — not all! — representatives from Israel. The result was that there was no panel, but an equal discussion, from which Avneri, Peled and Zikhroni, as well as some Communist representatives, were absent. Also absent were PLO representatives who were promised to speak to the NGOs in a formal session which never took place.

Non-governmental observers attend UN conference on Palestine. Uri Avneri, centre, and behind him, partially blocked out, is Matti Peled. "Playing the regular diplomatic, political, military game is like playing into the hands of the aggressors."

by Thoma Shick

It was obvious that the fault was on the Israeli partners' side, but it was shared by those NGOs who hold strong anti-Zionist standpoints, that provoked in advance the expression of a discriminatory attitude from the Israelis' side. It could be more effective for the presentation of truth, and probably for the overcoming of obstacles, if the panel had taken place as originally planned and the discussion discovered the differing directions that should be overcome.

4. Then came the reception invited by PLO Foreign Minister Farouq Kaddoumi. Invitations were distributed personally, by the conference staff, put in "pigeon-holes" at the NGOs Launch, and on a table nearby. By all these means, some delegations from Israel were excluded. There were rumours that only international organisations were invited, which was found untrue, as well as guesses about only big organisations, etc. It was rather obvious that Zionist, or seemingly such, or rather organisations from Israel, were excluded. This exclusion included: Democratic Women, Women Against War and Conquest, and my War Resisters group — all anti-Zionist entities; as well as the Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian peace. I'm quite sure that the choice was arbitrary and even based on an optical mistake, due to political ignorance of the people who did the actual discriminatory job.

It is important to emphasise that there were background activities taking place in order to enable all the delegates from Israel to be invited. At a certain stage, myself and some other delegates from Israel were approached by a man who said: "I'm coming from Arafat. All the Israelis are invited as a whole, without invitations. Arafat said he wanted to be with these people, to sit down and talk with them." The end was, after all, that those who didn't get invitations in hand couldn't enter.

This situation was not only arrogant in a sense, but not very clever, not to speak of its unfairness. Of course, it doesn't serve the cause of common struggle and consent for a solution to the conflict. It also presented a split picture on trends in the PLO.

5. Obviously as a result of the chain of occurences, Uri Avneri changed the text of his speech as an "eminent personality" to the plenary session of the conference. His speech had basically Zionist emphases. It was a chain of offending expressions, with nothing practical. He played the diplomatic game well: "If you offend me, I will offend you back" . . ."A performance for adults only, in which they behave childishly"...

6. The ICQP ended without any genuine resolution for action, especially not for involvement of the masses of Palestinian Arab and Israeli Jews, and of course not of the sympathetic world population. Only formalities, words of condemnation and very general directives. The Israelis went home without having a real message to the people there, who are brainwashed by a genius system of sophisticated propaganda. No new trends, no new ideas, no new actions.

7. Another incident happened to me personally that was a natural follow-up to the above. In Geneva I discovered there was to be an international symposium on Sabra and Shatila, to take place Septemeber 16-18 in Athens, and so immediately I changed my travel plans, which went through Athens anyway on my way back to Haifa by ship. In Athens I was told the symposium was free and open to the public. When I arrived at the Holiday Inn Hotel, no security checking took place. I went through all the regular formalities of collecting printed material, registration, getting earphones, and even stood in a queue for 25 minutes waiting to be photographed for a conference badge. I was sitting in front of the photographing machine, when the secretariat asked me politely but significantly, "Have you been invited?" . . . Four people checked my case, after which I was finally given an explanation which made it clear that the only reason I couldn't attend was that I was from Israel. They didn't check my ideology or viewpoint, they didn't ask me what I was doing. I presented to them the UN Geneva ICQP badge as evidence I was good enough for that conference . . . I explained how defective their attitude was . . . nothing helped. I believe that this kind of attitude doesn't help the Palestinians. The formalistic prestige-seeking way doesn't help to overcome the problems. I'm not an Israeli in the mental sense. Indeed I have three home-places, but no one homeland — I'm a world citizen. With me you don't have a conflict at all! With me you must not make peace! I don't have to stop being your oppressor, because I'm definitely not! In spite of this, I was automatically "identified" and discriminated against.

On the other hand, Avneri, Peled and the like are Israelis, who easily can adapt themselves into the prevailing system in Israel and are welcomed if doing so. They don't do this: I heard lawyer Amnon Zikhroni arguing with a Swiss Jewish pro-Zionist journalist who equated the PLO with the German Nazi movement of the early '30s...Zikhroni of course negated this comparison, but said, "even if so, we have no right to grab the Palestinians' rights"...Those "moderate Zionists" went through a tremendous mental and ideological development (Zikhroni himself was a pacifist total war-resister and indeed never wore an army uniform) and have their inner conflicts in order to overcome their own "national pride" complex. They will not conclude they should leave the country if they finally despair of the possibility of bringing together Palestinians and Israelis for a solution on what they believe to be an "equal basis," that is "two states for two peoples."

Dear Chairman Yasir Arafat, I know the pressure under which you work, especially at this stage of the struggle. In my view, the events of the last year-and-a-half prove that if a totally non-violent peace offensive were applied, the Zionists could not stand against it and would have to admit the universal solution that provides equal human rights for all the inhabitants (citizens) of the country. Formalism, confrontation on negative bases, collision, may bring just the same results, whereas through positive cooperation a new and positive future can be started.

I turn to you with a proposal of non-violence because it is possible to switch from violence to non-violence and still remain a revolutionary, a rebelling element, which you should remain. Love should replace hatred and revenge. Not defiance and defeatism to replace rebellion. It is impossible to tell the oppressor "stop violence." For this it should change its being an oppressor! That is what I tell the oppressor!

Playing the regular diplomatic, political, military game is like playing into the hands of the aggressors. When one doesn't have even the physical power to counteract these powers — even if not by principle, at least for tactical reasons — one resorts to non-violence. However, non-violence can be effective only when applied in a wholesome manner, with spirit.

As I told you above, I would like to meet with you and have a free discussion at length to analyse and exchange ideas on how to start loving instead of hating, how to start to step into the future instead of returning again and again to the very steps of the past, repeating the wrongs so much and so regrettably well-known.

Please forward to me your response in the most fitting way you might think of.

Yours in human fraternity,
In Peace and Love,
Thoma Shick

PRESERVING ARMENIA IN JERUSALEM

by Awad Abdel Fattah

On the southern edge of the Old City of Jerusalem there is a narrow, one-way street squeezed between two high walls which disappears inside the city. The noise of cars and people echoes down it all day. From time to time, people, mainly foreigners, stop beside a black gate in the wall, bend a bit and step inside through a small door. Inside, a man dressed in priestly gown receives visitors and guides them as they disappear away from the gate. The priest and the grey stone-carved inscription fixed above the gate reading "The Armenian Convent" are not enough to make a visitor aware of what is going on inside.

In fact, the convent is a big quarter which includes not only religious places but also houses about 180 Armenian families, half of the Armenian community in Jerusalem. Internally, the convent is not very different from that of the rest of the Old City. Around the two churches and seminaries, small houses with no space between them spread everywhere. Narrow lanes connect the houses and a few squares.

The Armenians' Presence in the Old City

Listening to an Armenian family explain how they got here is like listening to a Palestinian family in a refugee camp in the West Bank or the Gaza Strip. Both have gone through an almost identical experience.

Until 1948, there were only about 300 Armenian families living in the Armenian Quarter. In the area of the convent itself there were no families at that time, just the priests and other religious functionaries. According to George Hantalian, the secretary of the community's Patriarchate, the total number of the Armenians in Palestine reached 14,000 in 1948. They lived in Palestinian towns, mainly in Jaffa, Haifa and Acre. "Today," he pointed out, "only one-fifth of this number remains."

Hagop (Jacob), an old man sitting with his wife on an old bed in a small room where there is hardly enough room for one's feet among the furniture, told *Al Fajr*: "We have been living in this small room beside our five sons and daughters since we were forced out of our own property — 34 years ago." His old wife, with tears almost pouring out of her eyes, outlined their suffering. She said the whole family had to sleep on the floor in a very small room.

According to Hagop, about 6000 Armenian families sought shelter in the convent at the time of the expulsions. "But within less than two years, about half of them left for various parts of the world as they could not stand the acute overcrowding," he explained.

The Armenian presence, if in a very small proportion in Jerusalem and in Palestine in general, dates back hundreds of years, "since the adoption of Christianity as state religion by the Armenians. In 301 AD, they started to come as pilgrims," said George, consulting his history books. He added that in the sixth century there were many monasteries around Jerusalem and that their ruins can still be seen.

"Actually," he indicated, "in the 16th century, six mosaic floors with Armenian inscriptions were discovered in Jerusalem alone."

However, the majority of the Armenian community in Palestine came after the 1915 massacres in Turkey in which 1.5 million Armenians in Turkish Armenia died. April 15, the date of the massacre, is yearly commemorated by the Jerusalem-based Armenian community with a strike and a march from the convent to the cemetery, where a eulogy is given.

In the convent's two-storey museum, which is built in the shape of a circle, there are, among many other things, photographs of the Armenian massacre. "Like the massacres of Sabra and Shatila," noted the guide. He remarked that almost everyone in the Armenian community had relatives slaughtered by the Turks.

One woman told *Al Fajr* that all her brothers and parents were massacred in 1915. When they are asked why there has been no big noise about the massacres of the Armenians like those which have occurred to other peoples, the invariable answer is: "The Armenians tend to be silent about these things."

Other eye-catching artifacts in the museum include large maps of Armenia and its different geographical areas with Armenian names, but there are English language appendices explaining each area in brief. Also, there are traditional Armenian art objects and utensils. According to the guide, most of these things were brought by Armenian pilgrims from different Asian countries as presents. "This helped us keep in touch with part of our ancestors' heritage," he remarked.

St. James Church, the grander of the two Armenian churches inside the convent. *"The Armenian presence in Jerusalem dates back to 301 AD, when Christianity was adopted as the state religion of Armenia, and they started to come as pilgrims."* **Garo photo**

Courtyard of the St. James Church./Garo photo

Along with tens of thousands of Palestinians who were forced to flee during the 1948 war in Palestine from their towns and villages, aoout 95 percent of the Armenians fled as well and sought shelter in the Armenian convent in Jerusalem. All their properties were left, and none of the Armenians who fled were allowed to return to their houses.

Education

The children of the Armenian community study in their own elementary and secondary schools which are located within the area of the convent. Only very few students study in Arab schools in Jerusalem.

In the secondary school there are now 250 students. According to the community heads, about 80 percent of the secondary school graduates complete higher education, some in local universities but mainly overseas, particularly the United States of America.

There is also a seminary which is intended to teach theology to those who are interested in becoming priests. It also teaches a regular curriculum.

The community's schools enjoy almost complete independence. Administration, teachers' appointments and firing are in the hands of the prinicipal. There is no relation at all between the Israeli ministry of education and their schools.

Armenian is the official language in school, but pupils are taught Arabic, English and Hebrew. Armenian and Arabic are the most common languages of the community. Those who have been in Palestine for a long time speak Arabic fluently, and some even speak it at home. There are some who do not master Arabic, but they are few.

Livelihood

A considerable proportion of the Palestinian Armenians depend for their livelihood on commerce. There are 12 goldsmith shops run by Armenians, down from 30 in the past, eight photography shops, two pottery workshops. Armenians also own five pharmacies and small workshops in Ramallah.

Before 1967, a number of families worked in shoe making. "Many shops," said one Armenian merchant, "were closed because of Israeli competition as well as taxes."

Armenians feel that they have a reputation for business and establishing themselves. "We are an active and hard-working people," said Figaro, a photographer. Another elaborated, "If work starts at 8:00 am, we go at 7:00 am, for example."

Others are hired as labourers or clerks both in Israeli and Palestinian projects in the West Bank and Jerusalem. Among them there are 12 who are employed in the UNRWA offices, and 30 teachers.

The deteriorating economic situation besides the political pressure resulting from the Israeli occupation have forced a lot of Armenians to emigrate. According to George Hantalian, about 40 percent of the Armenian community has left since 1967. Three thousand Armenians remain in Jerusalem, and 600 of them have rented and bought houses outside the Old City because of the difficulties young couples face in the convent. In this regard, an Armenian millionaire recently bought land near the convent and built 40 apartments to donate to needy Armenian families.

Identity and Destiny

The Armenians in Jerusalem identify themselves as Palestinians, and their fate is bound to that of the Palestinian people. They have maintained good relations with Arab Palestinians and there has been inter-mixing through marriage. "It is natural," one young man who refused to give his name told *Al Fajr*, "to have a feeling of common destiny with the Palestinian Arabs in light of the fact that our conditions are similar."

He said the Israeli authorities have a hostile policy against them: "Many of us have been arrested and interrogated, allegedly for being involved in political activities." He pointed out that despite this policy and the emigration which has occurred in the past years, "We are determined to stay here."

George Hantalian, who echoed the same sentiments regarding identity, expressed worry about the danger to the future presence of the Armenian community in Jerusalem, "because the Israelis try to change the character of the Old City."

NOT SO FAR FROM HOME

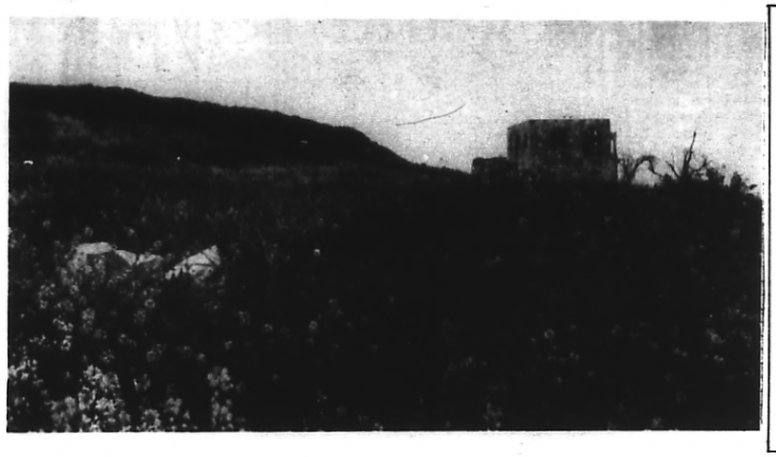
Families who fled their villages in Palestine during the hot of battle in 1948 carrying several days' food and clothing, with small ones in tow, are now watching their children's grandchildren growing up in refugee camps — in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, and in the West Bank and Gaza. Subsequent major wars in 1967 and 1982, and a series of expulsions in between, created new refugees as well as further displacing the already homeless, pushing Palestinian families farther away from their homes and homeland.

The right of return is a basic national, human right, specifically promised to Palestinian refugees in 1949 in UN Resolution 194. But where is home? More than 400 Palestinian villages have been routed, bulldozed and buried by Israeli forces since 1948. The ruins of the villages have almost all been obliterated and their rich lands confiscated for exclusively Jewish settlements. In West Bank and Gaza camps, refugees less than an hour away from their ancestral home watch and wait.

In April 1983, UNRWA began to undertake a survey on the history of the 28 official refugee camps in the West Bank and Gaza and the place of origin of their residents. This week's Al Fajr *focuses on the five camps in the Hebron area, the southernmost in the West Bank. As more information is collected, we hope to eventually identify the home villages of all camp residents in the occupied territories.*

According to UNRWA figures, there are 2,260,000 registered refugees and displaced people from Palestine. UNRWA officials estimate that there is one unrecognised refugee for every one who holds an UNRWA identity card. In the West Bank and Gaza alone, there are 750,000 registered refugees, one-third of whom still live the difficult political and economic conditions of camp life. Jabaliya camp in Gaza is the largest UNRWA-operated camp, with 45,000 people, and Deir Ammar in the West Bank is the smallest with a population under 1000.

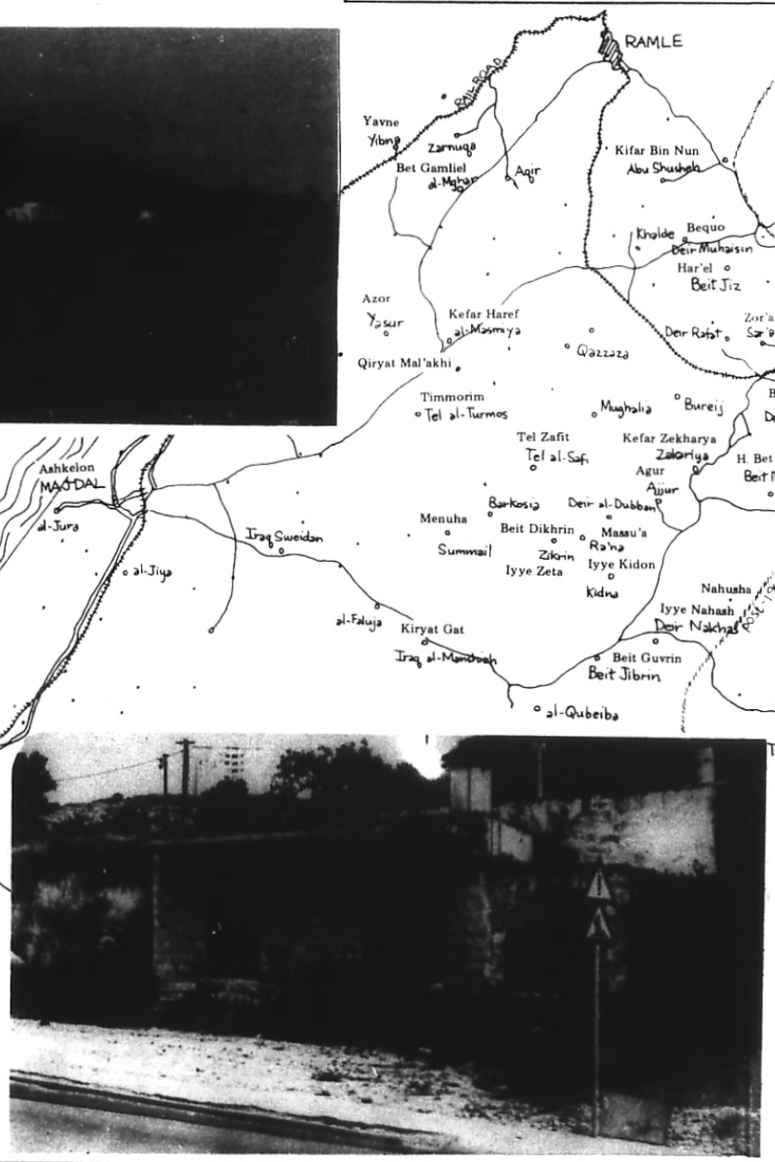
The camps are illustrative of the pattern of flight refugees took in 1948: Galilee and Triangle villages and city folk escaped northward to Lebanon, and Jaffa and south Palestine emptied eastward to the West Bank and southwest to the coastal Gaza Strip. The circumstances and path of escape taken 35 years ago is told and retold to each new refugee generation.



The entire village of Beit Jiz was destroyed — except for one lone house, an Israeli historical site marking the assassination of a Zionist fighter-turned-informer. Ruins of the village are still visible; its lands have been taken by Har'el settlement.

"Welcome to Yavne!" Yibna village was almost totally destroyed. Half of its mosque's minaret still stands atop the hill. A few houses remained, now homes for Jewish immigrants. Yavne, a high-rise Israeli settlement, takes its place.

The village of Miliha was left intact. Now the Jerusalem suburb of Qiryat Ha-Yovel, its house, mosques and cemeteries have been transformed into restaurants (as in this photograph), recreation centres and personal gardens for its new Oriental Jewish populations — while the people of Maliha live in Aida, Dheisheh and Beit Jibrin refugee camps./ Photos by T.S. Courtesy of Arab Studies Centre, Jerusalem.



MAP: These Palestinian villages (in hand lettering) between Jerusalem and Gaza are, with few exceptions, completely destroyed and their population in exile. Israeli settlements which were erected on their sites are indicated, where they could be identified, in typeface.

Arroub Camp

Southern Refugee Camps

AIDA CAMP	persons	percent
Beit Natif	748	34
Ras Abu Ammar	446	20
Maliha	303	13.6
Deiraban	200	9
'Allar	104	4.7
Ajjur	52	2.3
Surif	43	2
al-Qabu	39	1.7
al-Walaja	34	1.5
Jalia'a	31	1.3
al-Jura	28	1.2
al-Sammur	23	1
Badu al-Sabe'	21	.9
Beit Jibrin	19	.8
Gaza	19	.8
Beit I'tab	16	.7
Aqzan	14	.5
Zakaria	13	.5
Rafat	12	.5
Kadfa	10	.4
al-Quds	8	.3
Hebron	8	.3
Abu Gosh	6	.2
Ijrash	6	.2

BEIT JIBRIN CAMP	persons	percent
Beit Jibrin	651	65
Beit Natif	119	12
'Allar	82	8
Beit Awwa	36	3
Badu al-Sabe'	32	3
Tel al-Safi	21	2
Zakaria	12	1.2
al-Tibneh	10	1
Ain Karem	8	.8
Liqbab	7	.7
Gaza	7	.7
Ajjur	6	.6
Beit Dajan	6	.6
Maliha	5	.5
Qibyet Ibn Shahin	5	.5

FAWWAR CAMP	families	percent
Beit Jibrin	135	30
Iraq al-Manshiyeh	90	20
Ajjur	40	9
al-Falouja	36	8
Sma'il	31	7
Tal al-Safi	18	4
al-Qubaibeh	13	3
Barkosia	13	3
Kidna	13	3
Deir al-Dubban	9	2
Zikrain	9	2
al-Dawayma	5	1
al-Musammayeh	5	1
Aqer	5	1
Tal al-Turmos	5	1
Yazur	2	.5
Zarnuqa	2	.5

DHEISHEH CAMP	families	percent
Zakaria	170	19
Beit Itab	170	19
Ajras	80	9
al-Walaja	80	9
Ras Abu Ammar	70	8
Ajjur	70	8
al-Qabr	50	5
Allar	50	5
Deiraban	30	3
Beit Natif	20	2
Rafat	20	2
al-Sufla	15	1.5
Wadi Fukin	15	1.5
Ain Karem	10	1
Maliha	10	1
Mufalks	8	.8
Khalda	7	.7
Stan	5	.5
Tal al-Safi	5	.5
Deir al-Sheikh	4	.4
Beit Jibrin	4	.4
al-Qastineh	4	.4
al-Falouja	3	.3
al-Qubeibeh	2	.2
Zikrain	2	.2
Tal al-Turmos	2	.2
Suba	2	.2
Sar'a	2	.2
Beit Mheisen	1	.1
Sarafand	1	.1
Imshou'	1	.1
Beit Jiz	1	.1

ARROUB CAMP	families	percent
Iraq al-Manshieh	342	57
Ajjur	46	8
al-Dawaymeh	41	7
Arab al-Ammarin	30	5
Kidna	24	4
al-Mghar	18	3
al-Qastiniyeh	15	3
al-Tineh	12	2
al-Faloujeh	12	2
Beit Jibrin	6	1
Abu Shousheh	5	.9
Arab al-Wheidat	4	.8
Sahil	3	.6
Yasur	3	.6
Deiraban	3	.6
al-Bureij	3	.6
Qazzaza	3	.6
Tal al-Safi	3	.6
Artouf	2	.4
Nufalles	2	.4
Beit Natif	2	.4
Iraq Sweidan	1	.2
Zikrain	1	.2
Tal al-Turmos	1	.2
al-Musammayeh	1	.2
Jilya	1	.2
Deir Nakhas	1	.2
Kafrorya	1	.2
Yibna	1	.2
Aqur	1	.2

"The United Nations has been thwarted by the attitude of Israel and the United States"

Statement by Mr Sean MacBride, President of the International Peace Bureau, Geneva; member of the International Commission of Jurists; former Minister for External Affairs, Ireland; former Assistant Secretary-General, United Nations; former UN Commissioner for Namibia; Nobel Peace Prize, 1974; Lenin International Prize for Peace, 1977; American Medal for Justice, 1978; Dag Hammarskjold Award, 1980, to the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, Geneva, August 29 to September 7, 1983.

This conference has been a tremendous success, particularly in view of all the efforts that were made to try and prevent it from taking place, including efforts made after the conference was set up to try and create a boycott by a number of countries — in fact, the opposition that there has been amounted to an attempt to boycott this conference. The conference has been held, and successfully held, despite these attempts. The only countries that are not represented here really are two: Israel and the United States. I think that the presence of all 125 countries here is an indication that the world does not accept the boycott which was attempted against the organisation of this conference.

Despite these efforts, the conference has been a representative conference and also has been able to reach important decisions based on consensus. And you, Mr Chairman, deserve congratulations (from all the participants) of the conference for having achieved this, both in regards to the final declaration and in regards to the programme of action.

At this time at the end of the conference, when our Palestinian friends have reason to feel confident at the success of the conference and the remarkable consensus which has been achieved, perhaps you will allow me, Mr Chairman, to touch on some more immediately somber aspects of the situation. I would like to refer to some of the absent ones, to some of the "absentees" who should have been here.

In particular, I would like to refer to the absence of the mayor of Nablus, His Excellency Bassam Shaka'a, who, as you know, is the courageous man, the leader of the people of Nablus, who has survived several attempts to assassinate him, and who was to have been one of the distinguished speakers here, but who was not allowed to come to this conference by the Israeli authorities. This is to a certain extent an indication of the methods used by the authorities of Israel in their continued efforts to impose their will against the will of the people of Palestine. The (international) commission of which I had the honour to be a chairman (International Commission to Enquire into Reported Violations of International Law by Israel During its Invasion of the Lebanon) met the mayor of Nablus and was fully aware of the courage and the leadership (which) he has afforded to his people.

I have also had the opportunity of reading the speech which he intended to make here, and might I with respect suggest that possibly the speech prepared by him should be circulated and made one of the documents of the conference when the (final) report is published.

Another "absentee," or rather, many other "absentees," are the members of the Israeli community who have stood up for the defence of human rights, and as a result of their independent stand in defence of the United Nations and in defence of human rights, have been imprisoned and are imprisoned now in Israel.

I would like to refer in particular to Ehud (Udi) Adiv, who, when he was tried some 10 years ago by an Israeli court martial, stood up and said: "I am not a terrorist. I am a defender of human rights." He was sentenced to 17 years in prison and he is still in prison. But he is only symbolic of a great many other Jewish people who have stood up in defence of the rights of the Palestinians and in defence of human rights. I think we should pay tribute to them for their courage and the initiative they have taken.

In addition to those who are present, there are thousands, literally thousands, who have perished in the struggle for the defence of Palestinian rights. Some have perished by reason of their activities in defence of Palestinian rights. Others have been the victims of indiscriminate massacres that have taken place. The commission over which I had the honour to preside, a commission of lawyers from different countries in the world, investigated the legality of the invasion of Lebanon by Israel, and investigated the various violations of humanitarian law and of human rights that have taken place in the area.

After we began our work, there were further massacres in Shatila and Sabra, and in our report we came to this conclusion: "This commission believes (they are) a salient feature of the Israeli campaign in Lebanon, and culminated in complicity by Israeli military and civilian officialdom in the massacres carried out by the Lebanese militia, Phalange and Haddad, in the Beirut camps of Shatila and Sabra between September 16 and 18, 1982. These massacres were low technology sequels to the high technology saturation bombardment by Israel from land and sea and air of every major Palestinian camp situated anywhere near the capital towards South Lebanon."

It is hard to estimate the number of civilians, Palestinians, Lebanese and others, who have been the victims of Israeli aggression and indiscriminate bombardment in the Lebanon. We are living in a period of tremendous violence and brutality in the world, and this leads us to accept these things and take them for granted — take for granted things we should never accept.

One of the gravest developments in recent years has been that military attacks have been carried out against civilians, and what is more, have been carried out against refugees, against women, children and old men, who are in camps seeking refuge. Originally, it was a concern of humanitarian law to try and ensure that refugees, particularly women, children and old people, would be spared and protected. Now the position has been so that we find that refugees are prime targets for military attacks. This is an extremely serious problem, which should receive the attention of the international community. We have a duty to protect refugees. We have a duty to protect those who are in hospitals, those who are wounded. We have a duty to protect civilians, and we must never, never accept a situation in which it is regarded as normal that civilians and refugees should be the prime targets of the actions of armies in any internal or international conflict.

(During) World War II, we (saw) the breakdown of all rules of humanitarian law, all rules of humanity, including the massacre of six million Jews. The leaders of the world got together and adopted a code of conduct. (They) adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and they adopted the Charter of the United Nations. And in the charter they provided, the peoples of the United Nations determined to save the succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and the worth of human persons... We are now facing a world in which aggression has become an everyday occurrence. We are now facing a situation in which the United Nations, which was set up as a supreme world authority to protect mankind, is gradually becoming paralysed by the actions of one or two states in the world. And in regard to Palestine, let us face the reality — the United Nations has been thwarted and paralysed by the attitude of Israel and the United States of America. I would take this occasion to appeal over the heads of the present leaders of these two countries to the people of Israel and to the people of the United States, who, I believe, are not aware of some of the things that are being done in their name, that they should insist on insuring the rights of the Palestinian people to their homeland and insuring protection for the people who are living under Israeli rule.

Palestinian refugees in the camp of Ain al-Hilweh in Lebanon.

"Originally it was a concern of humanitarian law to ensure that refugees would be spared and protected. Now we find that refugees are prime targets for military attacks."

PALESTINE AND LITERATURE

REFLECTIONS OF LEBANESE POET MOHAMMED AL–SHAMS

From Childhood Fields to Desert Legends

Pedro Marinez Montafir, the Spanish Orientalist, said Mohammed Shams al-Din is the most important and promising poet in modern Lebanese poetry. He is not only the poet of South Lebanon, but could be ranked internationally.

In an interview conducted in Beirut, Mohammed Shams al-Din was asked:

In your four collections, a musical tone dominated your poetry. It is seen in your rhythm (and in the architectural rhyming divisions of the poem). You also use symbols from Arab heritage and history such as Hajaj, Balqis and Laila*.

Shams al-Din: I believe that singsong style (in my poems) was formulated and shaped in my early childhood. It is the first structure of which I was aware. My childhood was influenced by a series of animating rhymes which penetrated deeply in my heart like a silver dagger. My grandfather used to take me to the villagers' Friday evening mourning services. I used to follow him closely, getting a mysterious pleasure, and listen intently to the very beautiful and sad poetry:

Yesterday, they were here
Today they departed
They left fire in my heart
I swear if they return
I will plant the road of kindness
With sweet basil

My simple child's heart was affected by these sweet sad elegies. I lamented even without understanding the meaning of the words. I still remember a beautiful young woman neighbour who used to embrace me and sing:

Oh, dear, who came from
Rafra (village)
Oh, dear, wearing yellow hooded cloth
Oh, dear, salute my lover

Thus my spirit was engraved with these rhymes and my eyes charmed by the yellow spreading fields of tobacco in South Lebanon. I was also preoccupied and fascinated by the charms of nature when I used to walk alone in the fields surrounding the village. I walked in all seasons, in sun, dust, strong storms, heavy rain. I walked half-naked, barefooted, open-eyed, empty-handed.

I liked walking very much but I did not know why. Maybe my spirit was untamed from early childhood. I was an asocial person. Singing alone in the wilderness, I was more comfortable with trees, rocks and the sun than with people and friends. My father used to travel the whole year to earn our living and I used to wait for him for his gifts. In my turn I offered him petty gifts of dried tobacco leaves which I collected from the field, ground and put in a small box.

When I talk about my childhood I talk of the secret spring which is the source of my poetry. Poetry comes from the heart where old strains of suppressed music exist, the orchestra of dead birds exists. I try now to rouse them, to search for them like the deer in a desert looks for a hidden spring. When I open my eyes to see that wasted childhood, I only found a bed of music, the retained melody of dreams, the sad-faced woman's singing whose features are alike to Mary's, surrounded by a white halo and black eyes. I listen attentively to some strange sounds, for the lament in a distant tunnel, people's blood gurgling, for wounded singing, the whistles of tree branches, village dogs, strong thunder...when I am afraid of something, I spontaneously begin singing.

This is the relation between singing and my childhood, or poetry, and longing. For longing wears more than one mask, therefore my poetry wears many masks, borrowed from history, culture and other things. In poetry, normality does not exist; containers, receptacles, threshing floors of the past are filled with new water. The basin, formed and filled with rain, is now filled with tears — the deer which was my friend, betrays. The homeland is an exile and I am now a gipsy and there is a certain conspiracy in nature against me. The lamb, the wolf, the river, the mountain, Su'da, Balqis, Mary, clouds and soil are chasing me.

Everything has been turned upside down against me, they drag me into waterfalls and streams. You can see swellings on my face. The bells are transformed into spies, the long minaret from which *Bilal*** used to call people to perform prayers now is a big hole watching and following me. The village wedding is now changed into a bloody one.

Painting (by an anonymous Persian artist) of Laila and Qais in Paradise. (1450).

You talked about masks...why... where?

Childhood is a mask of the self and the self is very deep and has no base, the self is infinite, as if "I am the other" as Rampu said. The self shows contradictions which are reflected within poetry's vision.

Rejoice in the poets, cheer them. They are the first magicians, the first lovers, there are no geographic boundaries in their vision, for them the earth is jelly-like, without stones.

The masks are not only made of stone or light but they are masks of mankind in its long history, from Noah's flood to the face of *Zaynab****. In *Smuggled Poems to My Darling Asia*, I wore many masks, such as "Hajaj's Mask", which is a violent mask. When Hajaj Ben Yusef wanted to make ritual ablutions at dawn, he could not use water. "My body refused water and accepted blood."

Hajaj goes to Rufe's Mosque, enters, turns his face to the *mihrab* and extends his hand to the place of prayer. His body is shaking terribly; he sees eyes shining like diamonds in darkness, a blood-covered head floating towards him. This scene ends when Hajaj covers his face with his hands and his face is changed into marble.

What about Laila's face?

The face of Laila is an Arab love myth — her lover Qais Ben Mulawah is an unrealistic lover. He loves and sees her in palm branches, deer, distant tents, the moon reflected in water:

A deer approached me
and when it came closer
I saw Laila, I hugged her
She disappeared
Alas, where is Laila?

I used some other mask symbols of heritage such as Balqis, Dik al-Jinn Hamsi, Mutanbi ****, Jubran, etc. These different characters express a single personality; it is my solitude.

I see the completion of my perceived personality in Dik al-Jinn Hamsi — this rebellious destitute lover who killed his darling "'ward" because of jealousy. He burned the corpse and formed her ashes into a cup in which he started drinking wine in regret for what he did and continued writing poetry until his death.

In Dik al-Jinn's story, there is a heated debate between love and death, desire and suspicion, regret and crime.

(Translation: Al Shaab, October 7, 1983).

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* *Hajaj* Ben Yusef Thaqufi was a dictator who governed the province of Kufeh in the eighth century. His reputation is that of a merciless governor. He killed all his Khawarj opponents and supporters of Mohammed's decendents — the Shi'ites. Hajaj also bombarded the Kaba Mosque in Mecca with catapults and defeated the Islamic Caliph Jafar Ben Zubeir, son of Abu Bakr's daughter, the first caliph.

Balqis was the queen of Yemen who lived at the time of King Suleiman of Palestine. She is known for her beauty and wisdom.

Laila has gone down in Arabic literature as a Beduin woman of the Ummayyad period with a reputation for great beauty and faithfulness to her lover Qais, who went insane with love for her. The story of Qais and Laila is a kind of romantic love which is connected with romantic poetry. The story itself is a condemnation of tradition.

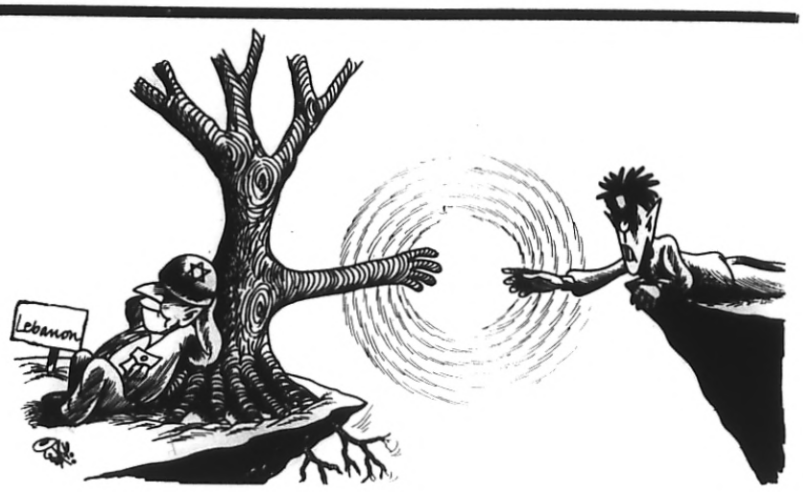
** *Bilal* was an Ethiopian who joined Mohammed the prophet and started calling Muslims to prayer. Before his conversion to Islam, he was a slave serving prominent figures in the Qureish tribe in Mecca. He is known for his beautiful voice and patience in enduring the tortures of his masters, who used to cudgel him under the sun of the peninsula.

*** *Zaynab* was the queen of Tadmur, Syria. She scored great victories against the Romans. She is known for her strong personality, beauty and wisdom.

**** *Dik al-Jinn Hamsi* is a fictitious character from Arab mythology who lived in Homs, north of Syria and, according to myths, killed his lover.

***** *Mutanbi* was a well-known Arab poet who lived during the Abbassid period. His poetry is classic, serious and strong. He was an ambitious man and claimed he was a prophet.

WINDOW ON THE ARAB PRESS



Front-page reports about the sharp devaluation of the Israeli shekel and the hike of prices were printed in local, daily and weekly Palestinian newspapers. Other news reports dealt with Fatah's internal crisis and the escalation of dispute between Damascus and the PLO and the political manoeuvre in approach to the steps of reconciliation between the warring factions in Lebanon and continuing skirmishes between the national resistance forces and the Lebanese Army and the Phalangists. The domestic news dealt also with educational topics and implementation of recent military orders regarding bringing funds from Jordan, union elections and women's group activities.

Against Inter-Fighting

Reports from north Lebanon talk about increased tension and the possibility of internecine fighting. At the same time other reports deny this.

Regardless of reports, the Palestinian and Arab people are worried about a renewal of internal fighting. These people cannot ignore what is happening and do not accept the idea of fighting to resolve local disputes. They, therefore, urge the PLO to make sure that none of this will happen.

There should be guarantees to prevent any internal disputes. The National Salvation Front is neutral in that dispute. Why isn't it asked to help make sure no fighting occurs?

AL TALIA
October 6

Call for the Workers and Small Businessmen

Now that Yitzhak Shamir has been able to establish another Begin government without Begin, he feels that he can do anything he wants.

An Israeli news announcer quoted sources from the ministry of finance last night that Minister Aridor has agreed on new economic plans with Shamir and will brief the cabinet on them after the vote of confidence on Monday.

Even though the details are not known, we can make a guess. It would include cancelling any cost-of-living increases, reducing government subsidies, reducing the budget by US$1 billion dollars, which will be cut from social services, health and other services. This would mean an increase in unemployment, which will reduce purchasing, in turn forcing small businesses to close.

All these will hurt the workers and small businessmen worst of all. The Arabs as well will be the first victims. Since the Alignment was not able to bring down the Begin government, even though it had 50 members in the Knesset, it therefore cannot be depended on. If we, the Communist organisations, had 14 members in Knesset, instead of the current four, we would have been able to bring down that government.

It is a serious matter. We need to think of feeding our children when it is time for the coming election.

AL ITTIHAD
October 7

The Palestinian Concern

In spite of everything, Yasir Arafat still insists he wants to avoid military clashes with Syria. This feeling is echoed by many other Palestinian officials.

A Palestinian official expressed yesterday the PLO's desire to strengthen its ties with Damascus through an agreement based on the Palestine National Council and Arab summit resolutions. This would mean strategic alliance between them to face the common challenges, taking into regards the independence of the Palestinian decision.

This concern, which reflects the historical development of the Palestinian national movement, should be welcomed by all those talking about confronting imperialism. We hope Syria will respond to efforts to prevent any further deterioration in relations that will be disastrous to everybody.

AL SHAAB
October 8

Rescue From the Sea of Pessimism

In this darkness overwhelming the Arab world, we as Arabs, are in dire need of any hope that may light part of our road. This hope could be from the Soviets when we hear them promising that a Palestinian state is within reach. Or from Europe as appeared in the Venice Declaration. It could be from America when they tell us the solution is nearing.

Our hopes come from the East or West. We wish that one day we will hear of an Arab initiative that would give us hope. But it seems Arab hopes are always Western in origin.

The most pessimistic recent reports come out of Damascus. Syrian news reports said all Palestinian forces, including the pro-Syrian Fatah rebels, are now barred from Syrian territory. This means the Syrian plot extends to all the Palestinian groups regardless of their affiliation.

If we gave up on any Arab initiative, we are in need now for a Palestinian initiative that would end division within the Palestinian movement to protect it from further . Arab or foreign plots. Such a move would at least light up the Palestinian skies. If the Palestinians do not do that, other Arab nations will light skies at the expense of more Palestinian darkness.

We are not building hopes on Eastern, Western or Arab initiatives. We are waiting for a Palestinian initiative that can rescue us from the sea of pessimism we are about to drown in.

AL QUDS
October 10

Israel's Crisis

Israel is now facing a severe economic crisis, an extension of its previous crises. A glance at this problem shows that Israel's huge war and settlement budgets have created it.

It is known that every time Israel faces economic problems, it covers them by engaging itself in external "events" which maintain war footing.

The Lebanon war, which is not yet over, and settlement in the occupied territories are undoubtedly the primary causes for this crisis. New wars and settlements will worsen this crisis. Therefore the only way out is to withdraw from Lebanon, freeze settlement buildings and recognise Palestinian rights.

The out-going Begin government tried to make the Israelis believe that after signing the Camp David agreement, prosperity would come their way. But it seems that the opposite has happened. The Lebanon war was waged on the remains of Camp David, which in turn started this economic crisis.

There is no doubt Camp David has failed to bring peace. The only solution is in a just peace for everyone.

AL FAJR
October 11

The Arab Worker and the Economic Crisis

The recent economic measures taken by Shamir's government which included a 23 percent devaluation of the shekel and a price increase of 50 percent on major government-subsidised consumer goods are bound to hurt the people in the occupied lands more than anyone else. The 100,000 Arab workers employed in Israel are going to find the purchasing power of their wages will decrease within days by 70 percent because the price increase will undoubtedly be coupled by exploitation in the market by shopowners who will add another 15-20 percent to prices.

To the workers who are paid in Israeli shekels, we add those working in education, government employees and workers employed by West Bankers but paid in shekels.

An Israeli worker is compensated for price-increases and so are their savings, which are usually in foreign currencies. Arab workers do not have these privileges.

Those who are paid in the Jordanian dinar will be in less trouble. The purchasing power of the dinar will drop by only 30 percent, including any market exploitation by merchants.

These Israeli measures, which will not be all, will mean a major economic blow to the residents of the occupied lands. Maybe it is now time to consider the economic weapon more dangerous than the political one — or at least complementary to it.

AL QUDS
October 12

100th War Resister Imprisoned

by Thoma Shick

Partial resister to Israeli military service in the Lebanon, number 100, was imprisoned this week. He is Reserves Sergeant Kobi Pether, who was sentenced to 28 days. He joined three other resisters who have been serving jail sentences for the same reason. A *Yesh Gvul* (There is a Limit) spokesman announced that the movement would continue to support those soldiers whose conscience is violated by the Israeli army authorities' rejection of their requests not to be sent for service in Lebanon. Signatories to the There is a Limit petition are prepared to serve in the Israeli army, but not beyond the border with Lebanon.

"You don't have the right to desert," said a bereaved father addressing his words to the There is a Limit resisters. The man spoke on Tuesday, October 4, in a ceremony for soldiers of the armoured troops who had fallen since the 1948 war. It took place at the former police station in Latrun, where a statue of a charging tank serves as memorial.

The bereaved father, David Gil'adi, shocked even army commanders among the public by his words, described by the *HaAretz* military correspondent as "contiguous with instigation and with no place in an official state ceremony." Among other things, the man said, "I'll tell the *Yesh Gvul* gang — there is a limit to your actions. Your actions create a wound in the nation through which our people might be affected. The time has come for you to put a limit to your crooked activities. To all the resisters and deserters whose lives were given to them by the blood of our fallen sons — you don't have the right to desert, even not into the walls of prisons — shame on your deeds!"

A *Yesh Gvul* spokesman expressed deep sorrow for the serious words of the father, emphasising that his movement begs to put an end to bereavement that has touched so many families in Israel. "Though a sorrowful person shouldn't be blamed for his sorrow, we reject with disgust the title which has contaminated hundreds and thousands of reserve soldiers and officers as a 'gang of deserters.' The anger and sorrow should be directed towards those who are responsible for this vain and endless war and not against the soldiers who struggle for its immediate end," concluded the *Yesh Gvul* spokesman.

In the meantime, Peace Now representatives presented Defence Minister Moshe Arens with details they collected on the burning down of the Hebron market two months ago by Gush Emunim members, following the killing of a Jewish-American student-settler. They accused the police of trying to "avoid obtaining testimonies of army officers who were on the spot."

Peace Now objects to any resistance to military service, both in Lebanon and in the 1967 occupied territories. Their arguments run on two different lines: resisting service is offending democracy, in which majority rule should dominate; Peace Now members may avoid atrocities and/or report on them when on army campaigns or on guard duty.

HaAretz adds:

The Herut youth movement has started a public campaign against *Yesh Gvul*. They asked Minister of Defence Moshe Arens to court-martial Lebanon-resisters to increase the maximum punishment for the conscientious objectors. So far, *Yesh Gvul* resisters have been sentenced by their commanding officers to successive terms of 14 and 35 days. A court martial can sentence a soldier to three years in peace time and 15 years in war time for refusal of an order.

Herut youth are to meet kibbutz movement representatives in order to enlist their support against kibbutz members who constitute 25 percent of *Yesh Gvul*'s actual resisters.

Cars lined up at Jerusalem petrol station, October 11, to avoid impending price increases. On October 10, the Israeli government devalued the shekel by 23 percent. Economic observers expect the inflation rate to reach 200 percent this year.

The economic crisis has brought out reactions from a number of professional and workers unions. The lawyers bar association has proposed that the Knesset bar bank employees from advising their customers on investment matters. Jurists argue that a clear conflict of interest lies in this area.

The Histadrut workers union has responded forcefully to the economic moves. The Israeli workers union has called for a two-hour strike, October 16, as a first step in what they expect will be a long struggle with the government over economic moves. The Histadrut made it clear that they would not discuss cuts in the cost of living increments. Instead, the Histadrut's secretary general is expected to demand the increase in the cost of living payments.

Meanwhile, the Tel Aviv stock exchange remains closed and is not expected to open before October 16.

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Economy

prices bing linked to the dollar as a first step, and all other linkage systems being cancelled. The plan has been under study here and abroad for six to nine months, reports said.

Some cabinet ministers said they had not been consulted about the plan. Likud's Yitzhak Moda'i and Tehiya's Geula Cohen both said they would fight the plan. Coalition partner Agudat Yisrael MK Shlomo Loricz welcomed the plan, however, saying, "It will show that what's good for the US is good for Israel."

The Labour opposition has attacked the plan.

Israel recently forged diplomatic and economic ties with the West African state of Liberia, which also uses the dollar as its currency.

Israelis stripped shops of pre-rise goods in a wave of panic buying. Shoppers grabbed goods before the supermarket workers could get them on the shelves. In East Jerusalem and the West Bank, smaller shops closed to avoid selling stock at uncertain prices.

Israelis and Palestinians alike are confused about what is happening. Ironically, Palestinians with cash savings were not hard hit, as they already keep them in stable Jordanian dinars or dollars. Business people, however, are totally confused as to what to charge. One East Jerusalem restaurant owner simply stuck a note on his price list reading "Plus 40 percent." At the Omayya Restaurant, prices were adjusted arbitrarily. "We just do not know what the new level will be," said one owner. His chicken bill rose by almost 100 percent in 24 hours. Many business people are concerned how Israeli tax collectors will react. "They never believe our returns anyway, and we fear they may try to just get money from us," one proprietor stated.

After two days of hectic trading, with the dinar changing price hourly, money changers shut up shop, refusing to sell more Jordanian dinars and dollars. They were still buying hard currency at old prices. Hamzeh Kurd, an exchanger in Salah al-Din street, claimed that his holding of IS4,000,000 devalued by $10,000 in 10 hours at the height of the crisis. Kurd stated that the minister of finance has prevented exchangers from bringing in dollars from Jordan for the past year. "I want to ask the minister of finance why?" he said.

Food consumption dropped also. Abd al-Aziz Robin, a distributer of dairy products for the Israeli Tnuva conglomerate in East Jerusalem, said that he distributed, October 12, only half his usual amount in three Jerusalem quarters. Robin said "This is a dreadful blow against the poor classes." Many Palestinian workers subsist on subsidised bread and other food products.

One of the bigger grocery stores stayed open and did good trade, "but we've no idea what to change anymore."

Mohammad Bader, 55, a worker in the Old City, described the latest measures as "beyond the capacity of an ordinary consumer to bear. The value of our wages have been tremendously decreased. And we do not know whether the Israeli government will pay sufficient indexation."

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Hassan Bek

Jaffa area residents also base their fears on continued bad will from the *waqf* trustees. Two weeks ago a member of the Jaffa Islamic *waqf*'s trustees asked the police to stop local residents from putting doors and windows in one of the rooms of the mosque. Residents say that the *waqf* trustees, who are appointed and paid by the Israeli ministry of religion, are "not interested in protecting and upgrading Islamic religious sites."

Locals have continuously demanded that the religious sites be turned over to a representative Islamic committee whose concern would be to safeguard the holy sites and not to "obey the wishes of their official Israeli employers."

"The preservation of the mosque is a reminder of the Palestinian presence in this area," said Hassan Abu Shehadeh. He also noted that an Arab neighbourhood around the mosque, called *Manshiehz*, was completely destroyed during the 1948 war. Since then, the Israeli authorities declared the mosque and its property "absentee property." Later the mosque was supposedly "liberated" — only to be sold on the same day, November 1, 1974, to the Israeli Gigi Peres, who planned to turn the area into a commercial zone.

A leaflet calling for the protest-prayer from the Provisional Committee To Save Hassan Bek Mosque, said: "Due to procrastination, deceitful allegations, empty promises and the shameful collusion of some appointed *waqf* trustee committee members, the Hassan Bek Mosque is still in ruin and daily desecrated by vicious elements.

"The Arabs of Jaffa appeal to the human conscience and common sense of the competent authorities and urge them to adapt themselves to the (UN) Human Rights Convention and give the Arabs of Jaffa their full freedom of worship and the full respect of their holy places, including the urgent repair of Hassan Bek Mosque."

Hassan Bek Mosque after the collapse of the minaret last April.

WEEKLY REVIEW

View of Aqbat Jabr refugee camp in Jericho, most of whose residents fled during the 1967 war. The 3000 remaining Palestinian refugees have resisted Israeli efforts to resettle them to make room for expanding Jewish settlements./JS

October 5, 1983

MORE SETTLEMENT IN WEST BANK

Seven new settlements will be erected in the West Bank, the Israeli Cabinet announced. Six of the new settlements will be established in military bases and the seventh will be a small town, northeast of Tel Aviv.

Two will be built south of Jerusalem, two more in the Jordan Valley, one in Jenin and a sixth near Nablus.

POLICE RELUCTANT IN INVESTIGATING ARSON

TEL AVIV — A report prepared by the Peace Now movement said settlers and police officers tried to persuade soldiers against giving testimony about the burning of the Hebron central market following the stabbing to death of Jewish settler Aharon Gross last July. Local police allowed settlers from nearby Kiryat Arba to enter the room where soldiers were giving testimony and to interrupt the hearings, reports stated.

SHARON WANTS EAST JORDAN

KFAR SABA — Former defence minister Ariel Sharon told a meeting here the area east of the Jordan river belongs to Israel. But unfortunately, he added, "it is not in our hands."

BORDER GUARDS BEAT YOUTH

QALANSUA — Border guards and police, heavily armed and travelling in seven vehicles, raided Qalansua village in the Triangle. According to reports from the village, youths were rounded up in a thorough search of the village. Some of the young men were beaten by the soldiers.

The local Democratic Front group protested the raid, which they said is "an attempt to intimidate the youths before the local elections."

SON BANNED FROM FATHER'S FUNERAL

The military authorities refused to allow Emile Awwad from attending his father's body after he died in Amman last Thursday.

Awwad, a resident of Taibeh near Ramallah, was forced into exile by the Israeli authorities.

October 6, 1983

PALESTINIANS ARRESTED

A number of Palestinians suspected of carrying out underground activities against Israeli targets in the Hebron area were arrested, the Israeli newspaper *Davar* reported.

The Israeli authorities, the paper said, believe these men were responsible for attacks on an Israeli military post in Ussama Ben Munqeth School, the Dabboyya building and an Israeli car during the past three months.

RELIGIOUS MEN TARGETED

TEL AVIV — Christian religious men have been targeted for attacks by Israeli newspapers. Several recent articles have accused monks and priests of smuggling gold and hard currency across the Jordan bridges from the East to the West Bank for local money changers.

SETTLEMENT EXPANSION

JERUSALEM — Areas near Aqbat Jabr refugee camp in Jericho are witnessing gradual expansion of surrounding settlements. The 3000 Palestinian refugees left in the camp have been advised to leave the camp and resettle elsewhere as part of an Israeli plan to resettle the refugees. The refugees did not accept the Israeli offer.

MORE US AID TO ISRAEL

WASHINGTON — The US Senate Appropriations Committee approved a US$1.7 billion in military aid and US$910 million in economic aid to Israel. The amount approved exceeds the aid asked for by the White House.

HADDAD LEAVES HOSPITAL

HAIFA — The pro-Israeli Lebanese colonel, Sa'ad Haddad, left Rambam Hospital here, after four days of medical check-ups.

The leader of the separatist forces in South Lebanon was suffering from fatigue and exhaustion, according to official reports. The Israeli press previously said Haddad was suffering from terminal cancer.

October 7, 1983

ARAB PROPERTY EXPROPRIATED

BEIT SAHOUR — Mayor of Beit Sahour Hanna Atrash received notice that the military government intends to expropriate 250 dunums of Arab land, east of the town, for "military purposes."

The military order, issued by the military commander of the West Bank, said the exact location of the 250 dumuns will be determined next week. Atrash objects to this order, saying this property serves as a source of living for many people.

MORE WEST BANK SETTLEMENT

TEL AVIV — The Israeli newspaper *Davar* said that during the negotiations to form a new government, representatives of settlements in the occupied lands met twice with Yitzhak Shamir, prime minister designate, and suggested the government erect 40 more settlements in the West Bank and Gaza.

The representatives asked also for the establishment of the Jewish quarter in the centre of Hebron and for building 5000 new apartments in the West Bank.

BRUSH FIRE IN HAIFA

HAIFA — Brush fire spread quickly through several areas of Haifa, causing serious damage. There were no reports of injuries. The cause of the fire, which was assisted by heavy winds, was not known. The fire broke out in the western slopes of the Carmel mountain near the Ahouza neighbourhood. One house was completely burned and several others damaged.

CHILD KILLED IN RAFAH

An Israeli soldier driving a bulldozer demolished a refugee house, bringing rubble down on a child who was still inside, according to the Hebrew afternoon paper *MaAriv*. The child's body was found by his mother, who informed the police of the incident. An investigation is underway.

October 8, 1983

MOLOTOV IN JERUSALEM

A petrol bomb was thrown at a border patrol jeep near the Palestine Museum in Jerusalem, Israel Radio reported. Israeli soldiers found two more Molotovs near the site.

STUDENT TRAVEL BAN

AMMAN — Jordan's chief of staff issued an order banning all West Bank students from entering Jordan even if they have places at Arab or foreign universities and have to travel through Jordan to comply with other legislation barring exit from the West Bank except via Amman.

150 PERCENT INFLATION

Israel's annual inflation rate will reach 150 percent this year, according to an advisor to the minister of finance.

NO EXIT FROM HEBRON

HEBRON — Hebron residents were ordered back from the bridges by Israeli authorities.

October 9, 1983

HOUSES SEALED

TEL AVIV — The Israeli High Court confirmed a military order to seal the homes of families of youths accused of throwing petrol bombs at Israeli military vehicles near Aida refugee camp.

STUDENTS INTERROGATED

Members of the recently elected Najah University student council were summonded by the Israeli authorities and interrogated for several hours.

SETTLER JAILED

A Kiryat Arba settler was sentenced to one year in prison with another year suspended sentence after he was found guilty of shooting and wounding an al-Bireh youth.

ECONOMIC TURMOIL IN ISRAEL

TEL AVIV — The Israeli economy is still in turmoil with the closure of the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange. The shekel was sharply devalued to IS 192 per Jordanian dinar and IS 75 per US dollar.

DETAINEES MISTREATED

TEL AVIV — Palestinians held in detention in a centre near Ramle prison complained of mistreatment and beating by Israeli soldiers. A letter from a detainee to an Israeli official said one prisoner attempted suicide after a beating. He also said they take breakfast at 7:00 am and dinner at 4:00 pm, which means they stay without any food for 15 hours.

SHAMIR TO ANNEX WEST BANK SOON

JERUSALEM — Israeli prime minister-designate Yitzhak Shamir told a group of settlement representatives his government intends to annex the West Bank and Gaza before the next Knesset elections scheduled for mid 1985.

PALESTINIAN STUDENTS ON STRIKE

HAIFA — Arab students at the Technion Institute here struck for one hour and held a demonstration in front of the dean's office to protest discriminatory policies against them, particularly in university housing and scholarships.

COURT CASE DELAYED

TEL AVIV — The Israeli High Court delayed hearings in a complaint by Dheisheh refugee camp residents regarding the closure of the camp's main road.

The hearing was previously scheduled for October 24. No date was given for the new hearing.

October 10, 1983

ISRAELI RACISM

TEL AVIV — Israel Koenig, the Israeli Commissioner for the Northern District, said unless 10,000 Jews are settled in the Galilee by the end of the 1980s, the region will become predominantly Arab.

POLICE RAID AL-BIREH MARKET

AL-BIREH — Police and border guards raided al-Bireh's vegetable market and dismantled all vegetable stalls put up around it.

Municipality employees and the Israeli-appointed mayor of al-Bireh fought with merchants. The police and border guards were summoned to help and then the market was closed.

Israeli soldiers stand guard opposite Dheisheh camp. On October 10, the Israeli High Court delayed hearings in a complaint by camp residents regarding the closure of the camp's main road./JN

DOCTORS TRANSFERRED

HEBRON — Three doctors working in Hebron were transferred to the health department of Bethlehem and Ramallah, for no apparent reason. The order for the move came from the health department at military government headquarters in Beit El.

The three doctors are Abd al-Aziz Shqair, a member of the dismissed Hebron city council, Mohammed Natshe and Ahmad Sarsour. Shqair was moved to Ramallah and the other two to Bethlehem.

LAND MINE IN NEGEV

TEL AVIV — A land mine was discovered in Negev, eight kilometers north of Shifta, Israel Radio reported.

The radio said tracks indicated the people who planted the mine came from the west. This is the fifth land mine discovered in dirt roads in the southern region recently.

FALSE ALARM

BETHLEHEM — All roads leading to the Church of the Nativity were closed for several hours after a suspicious package was found. The package proved harmless.

UNRWA RESTRICTS REFUGEES

JERUSALEM — UNRWA officials ordered Palestinian refugees to obtain a permit before they erect any building in camps. In Dheisheh camp, near Bethlehem, UNRWA officials stopped residents from remodelling their falling shacks.

AMERICAN CONFERENCE ON ME

BETHLEHEM — Mayor Elias Freij will participate in an unofficial international conference on the Middle East called by former US president Jimmy Carter. Several academics and officials have been invited to attend the conference, which will meet in Carter's home state of Georgia. It will be chaired by Carter and former US president Gerald Ford.

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

TEL AVIV — The Jewish Agency has invested US$12 million in the past three years in developing Israeli agriculture in the Jordan Valley region. The director of the Jewish Settlement Department Agency, Mattityahu Drobless, said that in order to develop agricultural programmes in the region, US$15 million will be needed during the next five years.

ANOTHER CHOLERA CASE IN GAZA

GAZA — A 30-year-old woman was admitted to a Gaza hospital after she was found to have cholera. This raises the total number of reported cases in Gaza to 12. Eleven of them have recovered and left the hospital.

October 11, 1983

HADDAD FINISHED?

SOUTH LEBANON — The Israeli-backed South Lebanon militia leader Sa'ad Haddad announced he is taking a temporary leave for health reasons. His deputy, Kamal Barakat, has been appointed in his place.

MERCHANTS PAY TAXES

BEIT JALA — Beit Jala and Beit Sahour merchants were ordered to pay IS 120,000 per head in value-added-tax for the previous three years.

MORE DOCTORS TRANSFERRED

BETHLEHEM — Three doctors employed by the health department in Ramallah and Bethlehem have been transferred to the Hebron area. The three doctors are: Mohammed Natshe and Hatem Shedeh from Bethlehem and Yousef Saadi from Ramallah. The transfer was effective as of October 10.

JOURNALIST PUT ON TRIAL

NABLUS — *Al Mithaq* correspondent in Nablus, Gazi Abu Kishik, received a military order to appear in front of the military court, October 18, on charges of "possessing banned printed material." Abu Kishik owns a bookstore in Nablus which has been raided several times by Israeli soldiers.

EXPLOSIVES IN NABLUS

NABLUS — An explosive device was discovered in front of a store owned by Salah Arafat. Israeli soldiers defused the bomb. After the incident, the store was found to have been robbed.

EGYPT RETURNS TRAVELLERS

GAZA — The Egyptian authorities refused entry to a number of Gaza residents travelling to Egypt. The travellers were held for several hours at the entry point on the Egyptian-Israeli border.

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Jumblatt

Q: Did you take sides in the dispute regarding the leadership of Fatah?

A: I have publicly stated my support for Abu Salah (leader of the anti-Arafat rebels) and his faction, as have other leaders of the Lebanese Front. We believe that in-depth reforms in the structures of the Palestinian resistance are long overdue and that, if realised, they will render the latter more vigorous, efficient and capable to face up to the problems.

Q: Does the definite abolition of the May 17 Israeli-Lebanese agreement constitute an irrevocable demand on the part of the Salvation Front in any future negotiations?

A: Yes, definitely. It is a very bad accord, much worse even than the Camp David agreement. It necessarily leads to a partition of Lebanon, deprives Lebanon of any independence and threatens the security of Syria. It is altogether unacceptable. We don't oppose in principle an agreement with Israel. On the contrary, we think that such an agreement is necessary. But it must be re-negotiated from the start on completely different bases.

The only possible agreement, an agreement which we could offer or approve of, must be based on the following three conditions: security for Israel's northern border, and so-called "Peace for Galilee", in exchange for a complete and total independence for Lebanon, which means first of all no Israeli presence, bases or facilities of any kind on Lebanese territory; and security for Syria. On these conditions no compromise is acceptable.

Q: What is your message to the Druze living in Israel who are today united behind you in so far as the anti-Phalangist struggle of the Druze in Lebanon is concerned, but who also seem divided between pro-Israeli traditionalist positions and more radical, Arab nationalist positions?

A: I would like to take this opportunity to express, through *Al Fajr*, our deep gratitude to all the Druze who support our struggle, which, as I said before, is not just a Druze struggle but a struggle between national and democratic aspirations and fascism as represented by the Gemayel regime.

I thank, in particular, Sheikh Amin Tarif, the spiritual leader of the Druze community, and all the segments of the Druze society, for their solidarity and active support of our cause. My message to all of them is: continue your mobilisation. We count on your support.

I also recommend to the Druze living in Israel to remain always united, to always keep in mind their brothers everywhere and to remember that they are an inseparable part of the Islamic and Arab heritage.

Q: Why, in your opinion, has the (US President Ronald) Reagan administration decided to throw all its first world military power and political weight behind the feeble minority regime of Amin Gemayel? In other words, what is your assesssment of the ultimate goals of US policy in Lebanon?

A: I believe that this policy is not limited to Lebanon. The Americans' policy in Lebanon is linked to their global policy and is part and parcel thereof. The goal of this policy is to prove to Americans that they can intervene militarily anywhere in the world, that they have recovered from the so-called Vietnam syndrome and that they can achieve supremacy through the use and the protection of feeble puppet regimes. This is the same policy which stretches from El Salvador to Lebanon. It reflects yet once more the stupid global approach of the Americans, a repetition of what they already tried to do in Vietnam and the rest of Indochina.

Q: Do you see any link between the US intervention in Lebanon and the American policy of deploying nuclear missiles throughout the Mediterranean area?

A: Yes, of course. The deployment of nuclear missiles throughout the Mediterranean, the development and use of so-called Rapid Deployment Forces... we are (witnessing) a new phase in international relations, a phase in which it is postulated that detente is over and aggressive policies must prevail supreme everywhere. Needless to say, this policy represents a great danger to the future of the whole world, of all humanity.

Q: This was already tried in Vietnam, and we know how it ended — in failure for the aggressors. True, the dangers today are even greater than 10 years ago. On the other hand, would you say that this struggle for liberation, independence and democracy may breed and consolidate a new Lebanese society, a Lebanese people finally united in its fundamental national goals, beyond the confessional and sectarian divisions?

A: As I said, a broad alliance of communities and political forces already exists and constitutes the spinal cord of the on-going resistance in Lebanon. Whether this struggle will lead to the consolidation of a national, secular and democratic society in Lebanon, it is too early to say. We are working to achieve this aim, but whether we will achieve it or not depends on whether we shall be able to realise, through the struggle, a new political consensus, a new political formula which rules out confessional divisions. This in turn depends on the balance of power which will emerge from the struggle in both its military and political aspects. At the present moment, the balance of power is one of a stalemate, due to the American support to the fascist forces. In the next phase we shall have to verify whether it is possible to achieve our goals through negotiations. Undoubtedly, in situations such as ours, there must be, ultimately, a winner and a loser. Strategically speaking, there can be no compromise solutions, no "reconciliation," between fascism and democracy. Where in history has such a compromise solution proved possible? Nowhere. Not in Germany, not in Italy, not in Spain. Even as a theoretical problem of political science there is no such possible solution. In the Lebanese context there is not yet a loser or a winner. The big issue is that Amin Gemayel, thanks to American and Western support, has not yet lost the war. The answer to this question will therefore emerge step-by-step from the phases of the process which will determine the changes in the balance of forces, and accordingly, the perspectives which may open to a transformation of Lebanese society.

Q: Did you find understanding for your positions in your European talks?

A: In Greece and in Italy — yes. In other countries — no. Especially not in France, where the ruling socialist party is decidedly pro-Phalangist.

PSP Chief Walid Jumblatt on the Civil War in Lebanon

Walid Jumblatt tells *Al Fajr* in an exclusive interview: the civil war in Lebanon reflects a struggle between national, democratic aspirations and the the US-backed fascist Gemayel regime.

by Livia Rokach
Our Rome Correspondent

There is a deliberate attempt by Western policy-makers and media to oversimplify the Lebanese issue in order to justify the acts of aggression against the Lebanese people, the president of the Lebanese National Salvation Front and leader of the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) Walid Jumblatt told *Al Fajr*, October 7. The West presents the present civil war as either a series of factional, secessionist attacks by various confessional or ethnic communities such as the Druze or the Shi'ites on the so-called legal government of Beirut, or as a war by proxy in which the various communities are fighting the Beirut government on behalf of a foreign, Soviet-Syrian, global design.

Jumblatt was speaking in Rome, where he held meetings with Italian Prime Minister Bettino Craxi, representatives of the major Italian political forces including Communist Party Secretary General Enrico Berlinguer and Vatican officials. The PSP leader said that the civil war underway reflects an authentic struggle between the national and democratic aspirations of the majority of the Lebanese people and the fascist state regime headed by Amin Gemayel and backed militarily by the US administration and other Western powers, mainly France. No democracy can be said to exist when the various communities are marginalised and discriminated against on every level by a privileged minority imbued with a fascist ideology and hegemonic designs, Jumblatt pointed out. On the other hand, the resistance front fighting the Gemayel-led fascist regime is based on a vast alliance, representing the Druze, the Shi'ites, segments of the Sunni community, the various non-Maronite Christian communities, the Maronites of northern Lebanon and the political parties. This wide alliance aims at replacing the 1943 French-sponsored pact between the Maronite oligarchy and the big Muslim bourgeoisie of Beirut, known as the "national pact," with a democratic order in which all the segments of the population will have equal rights and duties.

Q: Do you believe that the military balance of power reached in Lebanon after the month of fighting will induce the regime, and the oligarchy which it represents, to accept a new national and democratic order, based on realities, through negotiations?

A: This for the moment is an open question. We don't know yet if the Phalangist-led regime is able or willing to accept a compromise. We do hope that they recognise the necessity to build up a new and true Lebanese national state. But I have strong doubts about it, for two reasons: one, due to past experiences and looking back on the history of the Phalangist party, and second, because as long as they can count on American military power to support them, they will continue to indulge in the illusion that they can avoid making any concessions in favour of a democratic order.

It should be remembered that the Americans actually prevented the collapse of the Gemayel regime when they intervened in force directly, militarily, in Souq al-Gharb.

Q: Alternatively, will the war be resumed?

A: We shall see through the next week or so. If in the coming days it will be possible to start political negotiations and if the talks are substantial, then there may be some hope for a peaceful solution. However, if we meet but only have rubbish talks, if the other side demonstrates a will to avoid serious and substantial negotiations, then the war will be resumed.

Q: Last June you presented the Gemayel regime with a 10-point programme in which the conditions for national unity were detailed. Had Gemayel accepted to discuss this programme, could the war, with all its tragic destruction and suffering, and with the dramatic consequences of its internationalisation, have been avoided?

A: Yes. Definitely. In fact, we presented to Gemayel not one but many proposals. In 10, 20, or whatever number of points. But not once did he come forth with an answer. He just ignored all the proposals and each one of them.

Q: Why?

A: Gemayel thought that it would be possible for him to subdue the mountain regions through a military occupation by the Phalangist militias, which were introduced there by Israel. He thought that the Phalangist gangs, headed by professional assassins such as Samir Giagia (see page 2) and others like him, would occupy the mountains, and that later his "Lebanese Army" would take over and rule the country, flanked by these gangs, with US support. On the basis of such calculations, he thought it was useless to give any positive answer to our proposals.

Q: In other words, since June, or even before that, Amin Gemayel counted on US military support?

A: Yes. There is no doubt about that.

Q: A cardinal demand in your proposals regarded the need to hold a population census in Lebanon, so as to unmask, once and for all, the demographic/confessional perversions which have so tragically marked events in Lebanon in the past years. Is this demand still on the agenda today? Is it a part of the demands you will present at the "reconciliation negotiations," if such will ever take place?

A: Of course. It is high time to have this census and demystify the false claim of a "Christian Lebanon." On the other hand, we make a clear distinction between the need for a census, which would reveal the true facts about Lebanon and its society, and the political proposals. The census will establish the facts about the majority and the minority in Lebanon. This, however, does not mean that if the Christians believe that having a Christian president constitutes a guarantee for them, we shall necessarily deny them such a guarantee. There is no reason why Lebanon should not have a Christian president. But it should be remembered that "Christian" in Lebanon does not necessarily mean Maronite. There is more than one Christian community in the country. There are Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholics and Armenians, as well as Maronites. They are all Christians. Is it necessary to recall that the Maronite Phalangists have perpetrated in these years ferocious massacres against other Christians, and even against other Maronites, no less than against Muslims?

Where is the guarantee in having a Maronite president, especially if he is a Phalangist? So what we say is, we don't mind if the president is a Christian, but let him be elected by the people.

But what we do object to is having all the key posts in the administration, the army, the police, the security services and all the other structures of the state, occupied by the Maronites. This is where in-depth institutional reforms are necessary, and to this effect the results of a census will be fundamental.

Q: You mentioned the army. But during his recent visit to the US, Amin Gemayel claimed that the army is representative of all the Lebanese communities...

A: On the level of simple soldiers, the army is composed of Christians and Muslims, although the recent employment of the army in the civil war has caused a mass desertion of Muslims, especially Druze and Shi'ites. There are hardly any Druze at all in the army now, and just some Shi'ites left. But the key command positions in the army — and that's the important issue — are all occupied by Maronites loyal to the Phalangist regime.

Q: Through the past weeks, as the battles were raging, the Israeli government, and some Western media, have been trying to insinuate that it has given its blessing to the struggle of the Druze people in the Shouf, that it maintains constant contact with the Druze leadership, including yourself, and that in exchange for a hostile attitude towards the Palestinians on the part of the Druze in the Shouf, it avoids intervention in the civil war in support of its traditional Phalangist allies. Within the framework of such insinuations, the Israeli media have spoken of a visit to Israel by an alleged emissary of yours, and much publicity was given to a call by traditional Druze leaders in Israel for the "expulsion" of Palestinians from the mountain regions. What is your answer to these insinuations or your version of the events?

A: Israel has the major responsibility for this war because it deliberately introduced the Phalangists into the mountain areas. It made everything possible for the war to happen. It prepared it. In the months and weeks before the withdrawal of the Israeli forces, Druze sheikhs contacted the Israelis to warn them to stop their dirty games and get their Phalangist friends out before it was too late, before the situation deteriorated. These are the contacts of which the Israelis speak and which they exploit for their own political and propaganda purposes. As far as I know there have been no contacts since the fighting began. It is not true, moreover, that the Israelis did not intervene against us in this period. Their interventions in Iqlim al-Kharub and in Deir al-Qamar are well-known. It is also not true that there were contacts between us and Israel in regards to the question of the Palestinians. This problem has nothing to do with the Israelis, it is entirely an internal Lebanese problem.

At a certain point there was a military presence of Palestinians in some areas — a presence introduced under the cover of certain Lebanese organisations. The Lebanese regime and rightists used this presence to orchestrate a massive campaign to maintain that this was not civil war but a cover for the return of the armed Palestinians to Lebanon and Beirut. There is a general, national consensus among Lebanese against such a return, and the rightist campaign was thus heavily damaging to our struggle and to its authentic goals. Therefore, we asked the Palestinians who infiltrated into our areas under the cover of the Lebanese organisations to withdraw, which they have done. We have not "expelled" them as the Western media have written, but explained to them our reasons, asking them to leave.

Q: About 10 days ago the Western press gave front page headlines to a strong statement of yours against PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat, in which you accused him of trying to sabotage the Lebanese resistance struggle. In making this statement, did you refer to this military presence or to other issues?

A: I referred to this military presence and also to other issues. For example, we were amazed and profoundly irritated for months by Arafat's attitude towards the Phalangist regime. It is almost incredible that up till now Arafat has never denounced the Phalangist regime and party for having committed the massacres of Sabra and Shatila. He and his spokesmen have denounced the US and they denounced Israel; that is abstract rhetoric. But they refused to denounce those mainly and directly responsible for the massacres.

Amin Gemayel was personally involved in the affair of the massacres, but they refused to condemn him. At the Palestine National Council, last February, Arafat personally intervened to get a motion condemning the Phalangists off the agenda. At the inaugural session of the PNC no one mentioned the Lebanese left and its struggle. Why? What is behind this benevolent attitude toward the Phalangists on Arafat's part?

Q: Does your attack on Arafat and your position on the Palestinian presence in the mountains mean that the Lebanese National Resistance no longer has solidarity with the cause of the Palestinian people?

A: No. Not at all. Although at the present moment the Palestinian question has become secondary in respect to the struggle in Lebanon, we uphold the need to find a solution to the problem in the sense of a realisation of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people. But we think that the formula for such a solution as conjured up 15 years ago or more have become invalid and that the Arabs have to invent new ways and means to achieve this necessary solution. Moreover, we think that in any case such a solution must not be pursued at the expense of the Lebanese people. The formula of an armed Palestinian resistance from Lebanon is simply not practical any more.

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